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RUSSIA : THE COUNTRY OF EXTREMES

"1905"

From the painting by J. E. Riepin

Frontispiece

RUSSIA: THE COUNTRY OF EXTREMES

BY

MADAME N. JARINTZOFF

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

AN English friend of mine, while discussing with me the other day the possibility and the impossibility of applying the original Christian ideals to modern civilization and modern morals, came—by way of Mr. Bernard Shaw—to the tastes of the English public, and remarked:

"We are not too fond of making any mental effort, if we can help it."

As I was at that moment devoting all my faculties to the writing of this book, I was considerably struck by my friend's remark. To appreciate the central idea of my book seems to me to demand a little mental effort; for each chapter seeks to present a different facet of a psychological curiosity—a curiosity noticeable even to us Russians, well accustomed as we are to observing and sharing "extremes" of all descriptions.

Now it is one of the most urgent needs of Russia to-day that the attention of the cultured Western public should be directed to the appallingly pernicious and degrading system of Russian officialdom in domestic politics, which steadily promotes the growth

of *provokatzia;* a growth almost unparalleled in the Russian fabric, which otherwise is practically free from what our historian, Professor Miliukov, calls "the cement of hypocrisy."

I have therefore decided, in view of this pressing need, to take the risk of upsetting, in some degree, the peace of mind of any English reader, who sits down at his fireside with my book in his hand, and in the anticipation of perusing it with no more disturbance of his feelings than a calm lake receives from a passing summer breeze. A few of my pages which deal with the Russian clergy, with the monastic prisons, with the students' propaganda, and with home life, may also come as something of a shock.

But on the other hand I hear from prominent English social workers that England of to-day is herself undoubtedly being carried along by "the great tide of social revolution which is clearly visible in the contemporary histories of all the great nations." This gives me reason to hope that a frank avowal of the great drawbacks of my country, together with studies and sketches of all that has been—and is—either remarkable, estimable, or even trivially characteristic in her "extremes" and in her unexpected movements, and with a candid discussion of a few misconceptions which still exist in Western ideas about Russia—that

these may give a little extra impetus, however slight, to the widespread modern tendency towards international understanding. True love for Russia demands, in such as make her their study, a method of severe scrutiny, and a great fund of sympathy and affection; and these must further be combined with a keen and unprejudiced criticism, lest the fine flower of patriotism should degenerate into mere chauvinism.

N. JARINTZOFF

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE substance of four of the chapters in this book originally appeared as articles in the following periodicals: Chapter II in *The Fortnightly Review*, Chapter III in *The Hibbert Journal*, Chapter V in *The Contemporary Review*, and Chapter VI in *The Englishwoman*. My sincere thanks are due to the Editors of these magazines for their kind permission to utilize the matter of the respective articles; each of which, however, has been considerably enlarged, revised, and brought up to date.

N. J.

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From the painting by J. E. Riepin. An excellent picture of the crowd of "Intelligentzia"—students, professors, "gymnasists," "coursistki"—singing the "Marseillaise" in the streets of St. Petersburg on the famous seventeenth of October 1905, when it was generally supposed that the constitution had been granted. Similar crowds were attacked by the police on the next day in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

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I

THE COUNTRY OF EXTREMES

> We wear too many chains already, we do not wish to forge more chains.—HERZEN.
> The good or bad, for men and women, lie wholly in the use or the abuse of things.—GILBERT CANNAN ("Round the Corner").

RUSSIA is a country of extremes—but there are many reasons to account for it. From the very beginning the history of the land consisted of a series of events which had nothing to do with the racial character of the inhabitants of the vast plain. Peaceful, dreamy lovers of nature and of the land they worked on, the aboriginal Russians found themselves in undesirable contact with the wandering warriors from Norway on the one side, and with the ascetic Christians of Byzantium on the other. The pliable Russian nature yielded to the influence of both.

Then came the centuries of the Tartars' all-effacing yoke—and two things were engendered by it: the passion of the Russian princes to struggle through it to absolute power for themselves; and, as a sequel, the quaint Russian knighthood, the *Kazachestvo*, formed in the devastated steppes by the thousands of fugitives.* Then we see the triumph of monarchism;

* The subject is dealt with in detail in the chapter entitled "The Past of the Cossacks."

the reigns of Ivan III and Ivan IV, the Terrible (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries). But by this time unexpected developments were already possible in Russia; as a result of the Tartars' influence the Russian woman—above the class of peasants—was practically imprisoned all her life in the seclusion of her *terem* (attic rooms); but it was a *woman*, Marfa Possadnitza, who first breathed revolt and organized a mutiny in the ancient town of Novgorod. This resulted in her imprisonment for life in a nunnery and in the town's suppression as a trade-centre—but the spell was broken. The Tsardom was no more an unapproachable foe.

The personality of Ivan the Terrible is fairly well known, sufficiently at least to overshadow that of his son who succeeded him. But a greater contrast of character cannot be imagined. Timid, loving, simple, pure-minded, Feodor Ivanovitch rang the church bells, prayed in humiliation night and day, tactlessly interfered in the struggles of his boyares, wanting them to live in peace, adored his saintlike wife, and felt acutely the burden of his position: "Oh, Lord, why hast thou made me a Tsar?"

He did nothing for Russia, but the people's hearts went out to him in compassion. The pathos of his position found an echo in the hearts of the Russians, and does so even now. The presentment of Feodor Ivanovitch in Tolstoi's beautiful drama makes a lump rise in our throats (although it made a most cultured Englishman of my acquaintance chuckle at the "fun" of it!).

Then came the mysterious case of the identity of Dmitri I, unsolved until now, which involved Russia in a bloody contest; and then—another spasmodic change: Peter the Great, with his all-sweeping will and his tyrannical ways of reforming Russia, a colossal figure, outlined with striking clearness. The land gasped in his perfectly well-meaning grip. It might have driven another nation mad; but Russia was by that time trained to live through shocks. Many more of them came (the variety in her rulers' characters was unprecedented) and she stood them without expostulating, the people's patience only growing with each trial. But the repressed nature of the race wanted some outlet, and, affected by these centuries of startling events, it developed the national capacity for yielding to the impulse of the moment and going beyond all limits.

The first brilliantly educated woman in Russia, Catherine I, admired by the encyclopedists and humanists of her time, reflected in herself the national tendency: her motto "Everything *for* the people, but nothing *by* the people" is an impossible combination of extremes in itself, expressed with the wit of an omnipotent woman.

Then comes the queer but sharply defined individuality of Paul I, a monomaniac on military details, followed by the greatest enigma—the personality of Alexander I. Next the "Iron Reign" of Nicholas I; and then the short liberal period under Alexander II, with its varied results: a sharp reaction and con-

sequent terrorism, on the one hand; and on the other, the quick rise of the higher educational establishments to the place they have since taken in the social life of the country, and the apparition of the *Intelligentzia:* a class with no class-distinctions except an enlightened intellect—a society of all who are educated, whatever their origin, all who belong to the few liberal professions outside the Government service, all who form educated public opinion—all who, generally speaking, are the idealistic leaders of thought and the altruistic social workers.

The Russian woman of society, whose enlightenment was lacking up to the end of the eighteenth century, almost magically asserted her intellectual capacities and established her judicial rights.* She had been the indispensable moving spirit of all political movements, before the existence of any votes. In our days her social influence is acknowledged as a matter of course. It is this self-evident importance of woman's activity in Russia that accounts for her indifference as regards her enfranchisement, now that a kind of vote has been given to men; the franchise would be only a trifle added to her present position in home life, social life, and political life. The time when her rights were talked about has quickly passed; they have reached a stage beyond discussion now.

The latest step in this direction is very interesting: the women who pass the final "State-examinations" at the university not only get their degrees and obtain

* See *The Englishwoman*, February 1913.

posts as teachers of all kinds—professorships at men's universities included—but after twenty years of this civil service they will become entitled to the Government pension. More than that: when they die, their husbands will receive the pension!

At the present moment there is a marked tendency towards letting women occupy the positions of advocates or lawyers in general, and the Constitutional Democrats in the Duma are contemplating the admission of women to juries. Shortly after the ending of the Russian revolution, there appeared in Moscow a special institution, "Higher Schools of Justice for Women," which is now thriving on the support afforded by educationists. All activity such as this indicates that Russian women are bound to achieve another step upwards in the near future.

Again: there is, in the neighbourhood of Moscow, a district called Manaevka which has gained some celebrity for its co-operative societies of peasant women. They are specialists in agriculture—sturdy, fine-looking representatives of their sex. While their husbands and fathers work in Moscow, they not only manage their own farms and fields to perfection from year's end to year's end, but go out in batches to the big landowners, who make a point of sending for them from near or far, whenever some big job has to be done particularly well and in double-quick time.

Mr. Maurice Baring writes: "The Westerners said, 'This way lies dynamite;' the Russians said, 'This way lies dynamite'—and went and took it." The

epigram has a truth that touches Russia at many points. When the West produces the seed of a new idea, the Russians are apt to grow it into a plant, producing sometimes a flower of extreme beauty, sometimes a freak of nature. Instances of the former are socialism, symbolism, higher education—even vegetarianism; whilst of the latter I may take as sample the Ladies' Football Team in Moscow.

Twelve years ago, there was but one football team in all Russia—at a small private school, where it was introduced by an English teacher; to-day there is hardly a town in the land where schoolboys, workmen, and students do not play football at every suitable and unsuitable opportunity. In one small town on the Volga the native lassies always follow with eagerness the proceedings of the local "Smiths' football team," and even act as "reserves," readily taking their places in the team if any player falls out.

The lady-footballers above mentioned are exclusively drawn from the ranks of educated Moscow society —I should say from the most advanced wing!—and take their knickerbockered sport quite seriously. Nor does anyone laugh at them. What is more, those who are carried away by this manifestation of the modern spirit abandon themselves to the game throughout the summer; for there is no green grass in a Russian winter.

And yet, comical as all this may appear, there is something good in it. It may be that the next generation will acquire by such means an increase of the stamina which is so essential to its proper growth.

Any measures, any means—even though pushed to comical extremes—as long as the movement is forwards. "Forwards, even if back-first!" as a true Russian psychologist has said. Anything—except dregs of the old apathy, that still savour of servility.

Mr. Stephen Graham, in his book "Changing Russia," says that the greatness of Russia lies in the state of her peasantry and of her Church as they formerly were, and so calls her modern movement "a damnation." Needless, unfortunately, is his alarm that "in ten or twenty years illiterate Russia will become a half-educated Russia, and the difficulty will be to find conservative people at all." I am afraid there is no chance of Russia changing in this direction so quickly—I only wish I were mistaken.

The fact is, that the fermenting of contrasts has become part of the nature of the country; and the durability of this tumultuous state of things is inherent, in its turn, in another national feature: the spontaneity of it all. This is the obstacle which prevents Russia being pressed flat by the steam-roller of western civilization with its corollaries of practicalness and hypocrisy.

Forces, feelings, principles, longings are too genuine in Russia, too wholehearted, too unspoiled, too candid—whatever apparent contrasts they may present.*

* Where they are not open, they are a grotesque abnormality. In our classical literature there is only one figure of a hypocrite: Schedrin's "Judushka." In real life the rare gift of hypocrisy is practically concentrated in the underground world of the *provokatzia*. It is dealt with in chap. ix.

Contemplated *en masse*, by a balanced western mind, they are bound to seem primitive, although they are sometimes undeservedly called "weird" and "charming," taken all round. But we Russians know our way, in that unartificial labyrinth. We distinguish things easily enough, and, what is more, we fight recklessly for whatever we believe in. A good many Russians—mostly in the southern provinces—are hopelessly lazy. Others are so downhearted at defeat that melancholy makes them brood over their own and Russia's misfortunes night and day and pine away without their having done an atom of good. These almost hysterical persons are the worst members of the crew. Again, most of the "Intellectuals" are burning themselves away with their emotions, their self-sacrificing work, and their enjoyment of life.

There is at present a large number amongst the Intelligentzia who work before everything else at the hard task of spreading culture through the sombre masses of the working and non-working population of the large towns. This group of the Intellectuals consists of professors banished for their "malignant free-thinking" from the high schools at the time of the pathetic failure of the first Russian Revolutionary Movement; of their fellow thinkers and fellow sufferers amongst the government gymnasia-teachers; of liberal representatives of the law; and of those typically Russian students, who never have enough of working for others. The numbers of these "culturists" are growing rapidly. I happen to know something of

their work in Petersburg, and I will try, out of that knowledge, to convey an idea of that alluring something which is " just a touch more than the maximum," as Mr. Maurice Baring says in speaking about Russia generally.

Two institutions exist in the outskirts of Petersburg * which would seem to clash with the political *régime*, and whose existence under the circumstances seems truly mysterious and impossible to explain. One of them is the Smolenski school. Some thirty years ago a circle of people similar to those just mentioned took an ordinary, simple house on a road leading past several large factories into the capital, and privately invited those men and women of the factories who wanted to learn something to come to them after the work of the day was over. Ever since, these evening classes have been kept up, a cautious reserve with regard to them being maintained by all concerned when outside the wooden walls of this inconspicuous nursery of knowledge.

Some descriptive details of the school I have lately heard from a Russian girl who has taken her university course in Switzerland and therefore has an unusual opportunity of forming an independent estimate, judging

*. By the time this article was completed, the first of them, the Smolenski school, had been closed by the Government. According to the census of the nineties, 95 per cent. of the Russian population could not read or write. It was only two years ago that a law was passed for compulsory education, but the growth of the village schools is so slow that scarcely any result of this belated measure is as yet apparent.

the Russians with a Russian feeling and understanding, but with a mind broadened by the Western point of view. I will break the monotony of my recital by giving her own words, as well as I can remember them; their staccato character will not overshadow their meaning, I hope.

"It is straight from their factory work they come, you see; very noisy, gay, though tired; somewhat rough, somewhat ironical, but mostly keen to learn for an hour and a half in our bare, dismal sort of a school. We usually ask the new-comers what they would like to learn. 'To read books,' they invariably reply. They come in such numbers that, however we group them, we cannot make less than ninety people in one class. Sometimes, towards nine o'clock, it is almost impossible to breathe. Even the frost coming in through the window (which I open in spite of protests) is insufficient to purify the air. But one forgets that. The work is an exciting business. Some have to take enormous pains even to learn the alphabet, and then you feel a sort of despair about the whole country! But most are wonderful. I know cases where men have actually learned to read in the course of the first half-hour! . . . Now don't laugh, but admire him: I know of a dear illiterate fellow to whom the whole art of reading came as a sudden revelation in the solitary confinement of a prison—from several empty cigarette-boxes of which he remembered the names. . .

"Personally I never find the teaching difficult. You know, some of those who have asked me to teach them

A SUNDAY READING

From the painting by Bogdanoff Bielsky

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French, are now going with me through the history of the French Revolution—partly in Russian, but partly in French. . . . No, we all of us try to keep the class work outside politics" (she added, guessing my thought and interrupting her narrative). "Of course one makes many true friends and then one talks to them about everything, privately. I often ask some of them for a cup of tea on a Sunday. But we all of us sincerely believe in giving some enlightenment first. . .

"Very often the workmen come and themselves suggest some particular new line of study; then we find some one amongst us who is a specialist in that and can undertake the new subject. I remember how the courses in anatomy and subsequently medicine were introduced: one man came and shyly addressed me with: 'It would be nice, I should think, to know how one lives . . . what are the laws, I mean.'

"'Which laws?' I asked: 'State laws, or God's laws, or what?'

"'I mean the inside laws, you know: how it is that everything goes on inside us, as if it knew its work.' Another fellow, some three years ago, came and suggested a course in physics, the moment he had learnt to read with us. In two years' time he passed his exams. at the Technical Society, and is now head assistant of a professor in a laboratory. I forgot to tell you that it is under the gentle moral protection of the Technical Society that we are sheltering. Then we have classes for the law—there are many who want to study it—and several advocates give their advice

and explanation in all possible private cases. Practically speaking everything is taught there except theology or simple scripture lessons: nobody asks for that. Of course, nearly one half of those who first come soon drop it. And I assure you, some moments with the new-comers test my psychology to the utmost! They are mercilessly critical—so sharp, too. And the difficulty is, where to find for oneself that mysterious middle course between friendliness and reserve. You know the last thing a peasant wants is pity. They would hate us at that school if they suspected us of philanthropy. Heaven help you if you hint you seek their friendship: disdain will be their reply. On the other hand if you show your self-respect just one atom too much, you are sarcastically treated as a 'refined lady.' . . . Try to teach them under these conditions, if you can!" and, with a humorous smile, my young friend stretched out her arms in a gesture of perplexity.

"How did you manage then to find your footing?" I asked, knowing that she had been working there every night for several years.

"I usually take the risk, although my heart beats fast!" she smiled. "The point sometimes comes to an open discussion (which I prefer) through their habit of shaking hands with all who are not their foes. Well, how could I shake hundreds of hands covered with machine oil? And there isn't one washstand in that school of ours! So, if the new-comers begin to hint at my pride, and accordingly begin dancing a vigorous

trepaka in front of me, I ignore the performance and tell them openly: 'Yes, I do consider myself better than you, because I am more enlightened than you are. . . .' Do you know, they actually take this for a reasonable excuse. It generally satisfies them, and then we become friends, naturally. . . . You can't help growing fond of them—although some details certainly make you feel uncomfortable: for instance, the flirtation that goes on throughout the lessons—and *what* flirtation! . . . Of course we do not interfere; it is their own business, and they have their elected 'elders' amongst them 'to keep everything in order' . . . But I simply love hearing their thoughts about authors, about books. I am often nonplussed by the innate sense of beauty in their compositions—there is such a genuine originality, such agility of mind, such beautiful sadness and depth of feeling. I have about a hundred and fifty exercise books to look through every night—counting *all* my pupils, from all these new places," she added seeing my look of surprise. "And I love to do those from the Smolensky school best: especially as nearly every one of these books, smothered with finger-marks, has a private footnote just below the thick line that stands for the end of the composition: in these footnotes they present me with all sorts of impressions on various subjects—but in more characteristic, vivid, familiar language. . . You know, one can learn sometimes *the* most beautiful Russian from them."

One hundred and fifty exercise books to be done

daily—no, nightly! after the workmen's heads begin to droop on the class-benches, and after the long, long walk home has refreshed the brain of my charming young friend. . . .

She is one of those who earn their bread and tea * in the morning, in one of the new secondary schools (described later). Counting all, she has some two thousand pupils. Early in the afternoon, like the rest of the professors and students of her type, she hurries to "The House of Enlightenment," lunching on her way on a three-farthing pie "with black-beetles." (Don't be alarmed, my English reader! This is only our common joke in Petersburg which acquired full civil rights after a little incident that happened to a well-known man: after paying his three kopeks for a hot pie at a small street stall, he bit at it, as is our simple manner of eating these pies on a frosty day, and indignantly exclaimed: "There is a black-beetle inside!" "And what did you expect for three kopeks—a piece of velvet instead?"—pat came the pie-seller's quiet retort.)

But we are forgetting our serious idealists. Numbers of them live each in one tiny room, furnished with a shaky, narrow bedstead and a three-legged table. All their luxury consists of a small table-lamp and a soft little pillow from home. They dwell in that nook for several years—with the alternative of being arrested—just for the sake of an intellectual life and work, for

* We don't say "bread and butter" because the butter is mostly absent in these cases.

ardent, cherished discussions through the nights, for political and other students' meetings, combined with privation, suffering and heroism, for the comradeship of great men and women, for all that existence throbbing with exuberant youthful energy and feelings.

I have just been told by a Moscow student that he knows a great many amongst his comrades who give private lessons "for tea and jam." They go and tutor some two or three clever but lazy youngsters, and after two hours of hard work are given tea, bread and jam, as their only remuneration. There is something pathetic in that "jam"! But they would not exchange the form of their existence for any prospect of going into business, which is so unpopular as to be almost non-existent amongst the Intellectuals; men and women from the poorest classes long for higher education before everything else. Of course, the overwhelming majority of them clash with the brand-new type of the sportsmen, and mention them with just a hopeless wave of the hand: they do not even count!

Here, again, is an instance of another kind, which occurred quite recently.

"Wanted: a student to tutor three boys daily at ———. Salary, 10 roubles a month. Hard work and patience expected."

Such an advertisement did not seem very inviting, especially as the address was in the suburbs of Moscow, and a pound a month was a starving wage; yet one pleasant young fellow, already hardened by many a buffet of fortune in the course of his Studentchestvo,

hesitated hardly a minute about it. It was a sharp frost and he had no overcoat; but, covering his shoulders with his only blanket, he betook himself to the stingy advertiser's address.

He found there a very nice house and a large pleasant family of the old-fashioned kind. The host welcomed him, and, looking him keenly in the eyes, dispatched the business in a very few words.

"You accept the conditions stated in the advertisement?"

"Yes."

"I'm very glad, my dear boy. Of course you'll get not ten but eighty roubles a month—and please have dinner with us every day."

The newly engaged tutor stared. His host smiled most genially.

"The fact is, I only wanted to find out who was the poorest student in Moscow!"

. . . . . .

And oh, how bitter is the disappointment of the true idealists when they see a person like my friend, their comrade of Western education, occasionally go and play a game of tennis.

"What—*you* play tennis? . . . Is there nothing else left to do in Russia?"

Her heart has remained Russian enough to understand their passion for self-sacrifice, and to love it in them; but her Swiss training tells her that she will do more work if she takes a rest at times. Otherwise she is always there, with the rest of them at "The House

of Enlightenment," between her morning's work and pie-lunch and her evening's work.

"An extraordinary place. . . . Quite new, opened in February 1912, and erected with the money given by a few good rich men. A perfect palace in white stone—purposely built on the dirty quay of the evil-smelling Oboukhov Canal! . . . Next door to it is the *notchlejka*—which gives shelter every night to a thousand hooligans, if they can spare a halfpenny each. . . . Don't be surprised: it is for them that this palace has been built. Certainly they are not invited verbally or officially—but only tacitly, very gently, quite *po Russki** as you see!"—my friend added with a humorous twinkle in her eye. "When I was approaching this out-of-the way place for the first time, going to help at the House of Enlightenment, I was stopped by a hooligan who asked me where I was going. I told him. 'Don't,' he said.—'Why?'—'Our place is next door to it. You will be lucky if they take only your fur-coat.'—'Never mind, I will try.'"

They both smiled, and she went. Those on the pavement, near the entrance, stared at her gloomily, but silently let her pass. Inside she thought for a moment she was dreaming: hundreds of hooligans were freely wandering about the library of eighty thousand volumes (a present from a private collector, a prominent man of culture), about the spacious drill hall, staring at the swimming baths and spray baths. . . . She soon found out that most of them had to be

* Thoroughly Russian.

taught to wash their hands, as the books became unreadable after their first touch; "but," she says, "as soon as they learn it they grow very fond of it and pocket the pieces of soap."

In the course of the first fortnight the classes became crowded. Reading, writing, choral singing, drill, sculpture (the teaching of this art, for those who want to learn it, is arranged by a well-known sculptor), and a great variety of scientific and historical lectures illustrated by an excellent cinematograph. At the present time there are twelve hundred ragamuffins taught there as well, and their groups have to be arranged in turns, for which they wait eagerly. The number of the teaching staff is rapidly increasing, though they have different days and hours, because they will do this work whenever they can. Students are known to have deprived themselves of summer vacations in order to work at that place—not for money, but "for Russia."

"The ragamuffins are more pathetic than I could ever have imagined," my friend told me, not quite able to conquer her emotion. "One has to be ever so careful not to frighten them away. Gently—gently one sometimes approaches the delicate question about the father and mother, and one hears that 'there never had been a father' and 'mother lives on the bridge' or 'under the bridge,' as the case may be."

Quite recently I had a letter from her . . . "We are getting on—it is lovely!" she writes. "Our people are excellent: just one paid man, a sort of a secretary, proves to be sufficient to work as a link between all

the instructors—to manage the complicated business of arranging the time and the turns for everybody. My branch, the ragamuffins and myself, are steadily and enthusiastically working out a list of rules for the whole place—with the purpose of making it easier for every one to keep order."

This is a long step forward. In 1905, there was founded in Moscow "A House for the Children of the Street;" it collapsed as rapidly as it appeared—for the step was *too* long. There the ragamuffins were simply invited to come in and to do whatever they liked in the whole place! This is very typical of Moscow—*the* most Russian place in the Country of Extremes—even when concerned with English football.

But it is not the ways of the slums that may be new to an English reader: they exist everywhere. What I thought of pointing out as one of our extremes is the existence of these culturists—many of them prominent men of great intellect; some of them men of independent means; but most of them dear, pure-minded, poor, enthusiastic, young intellectuals, sacrificing their own strength and health to the verge of senseless altruism, burning themselves away in that ray of light they can give out, and always likely to be arrested for it at any moment, because nowadays it is not only what is on the lists of "prohibited" things that is regarded as a crime, but also what is not on the unwritten lists of things that "are allowed." I am afraid it needs a specially trained Russian brain to follow the meaning of this. An English institution on the scale of

the House of Enlightenment would give out food before everything. But then, the English ragamuffins and hooligans have got to learn elsewhere; ours have nowhere to learn. In Russian surroundings the English vagabonds would probably ask for food before everything else, whilst ours——

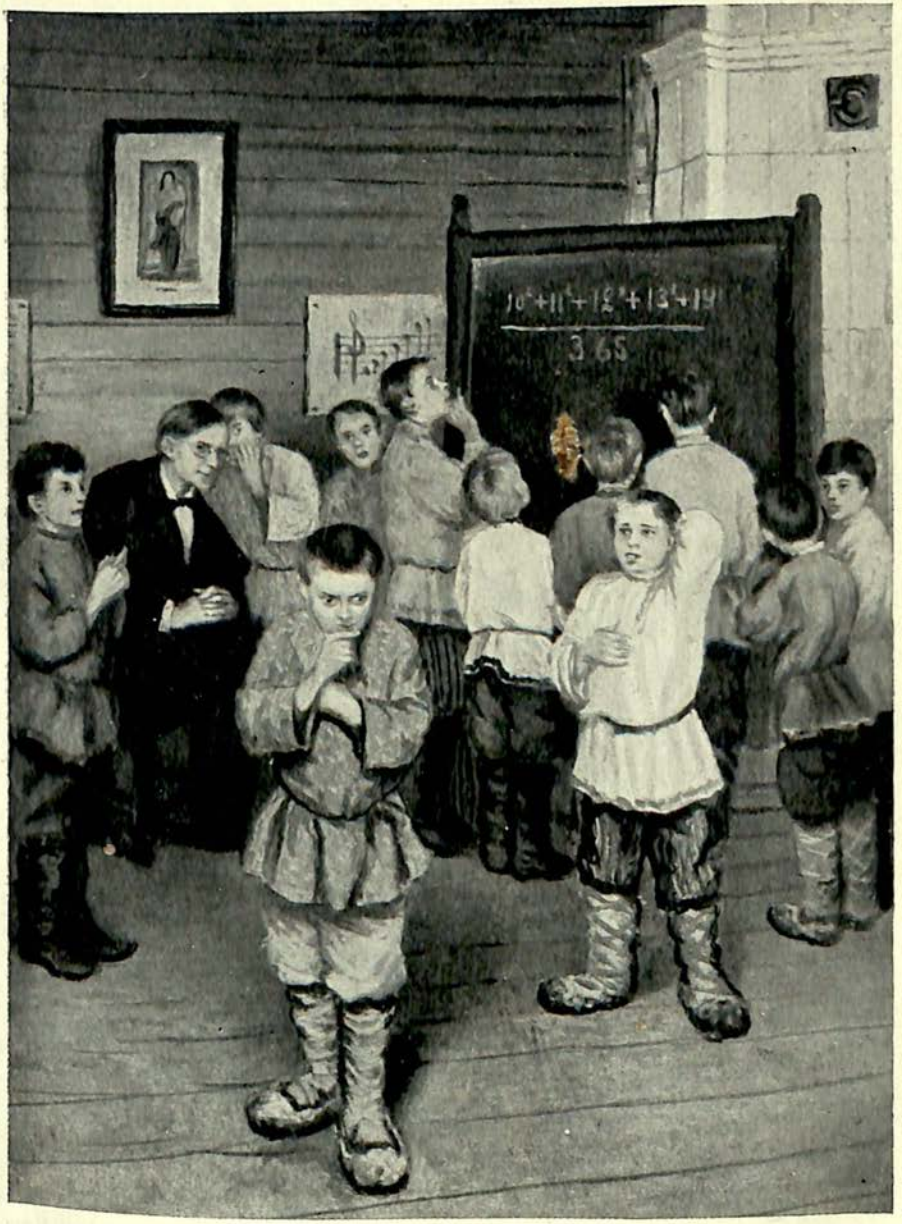
I asked my experienced friend the student-teacher first, to verify my own supposition.

"Yes, it *is* extraordinary," she said; "but I hardly ever hear from my primitive little pupils anything about food. They never ask—and they don't complain! Their mental hunger must be equal to their physical one, and they don't mind which is satisfied first, I suppose. They know that our 'house' is not a place of eating, but they seem to love it as if it were a restaurant."

"This is quite *po Russki*," I thought.

When these workers for the future of Russia get exhausted, all they long for is some sunshine, some warmth, some tenderness. A month at home in a South Russian cherry-garden, next to the little white clay-hut, spotless and quiet in the midst of Nature's beauty; with dear thin hands passing lovingly through one's curls again and again—and the beloved voice growing old and feeble with the everlasting fear and suspense, but not daring to say: "Don't go away again! Don't, my child, my sunshine, my falconer-bright! * It would be better for you to stay at home and work in our little field!"

* An old Russian term of endearment.



MENTAL ARITHMETIC

From the painting by Bogdanoff Bielsky

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No—she will not say it, for her mother's heart instinctively guesses that it would not satisfy her boy. The summer will come to its end, and he will again go back to the north, where he gets thinner and paler with his work every winter. Let him, oh, let him go, if he loves that work so deeply—only would that he might safely return for a while at times, and rest in the soft summer air of the cherry-garden!

Countless, too, are the little ways in which the passionate Russian love of Nature expresses itself. In Switzerland once I unexpectedly wandered into an exquisite district: white narcissi, in full bloom, were covering acres of land in a valley surrounded by very high hills. Turning round a corner I beheld two figures which made me stop short. They were young girls, fresh, rather plump, and simply dressed; their hats lay on the ground. But the surprising thing was that both girls were standing and yelling like mad—just one sound: "A-a-a-a-a-ah! . . ." Their faces were flushed and expressive of some very strong feeling, their eyes sparkled—wide open, like their mouths—and their arms were thrown wide in a very vigorous gesture. The yelling went on, second after second, in a very simple manner: just the "A-a-ah!" at the top of their voices, on the same note; nothing but that. One might have thought they were unknown priestesses expressing their religious ecstasy in a special way—unless they were ordinary ladies to whom something dreadful had happened so suddenly that they had lost their senses. Another few seconds went by in the same

way, and something subtle and unaccountable about the girls whispered to me: "Russian students." Unfortunately my feet slipped, and the movement I made broke the curious spell of the moment. The exuberant outpouring of Russian feelings abruptly stopped. It was only for a moment that we silently looked into each other's eyes. Then one of the girls addressed me as simply and naturally, in Russian, as if I had been yelling in unison with them for an hour:

"Lord, how beautiful this is."

Her voice was tender and mellow with happiness.

"Yes, it is," I agreed with all my heart; and we plunged into a conversation about Russia as if we had met hundreds of times before.

I have known a few cases when Russian students came to have their holidays in England, "and to learn something from the free country." At first they were enchanted with everything: "How well everything is organized! How orderly, how cosy! How restful!"

But in a month or two there would be a different sort of surprise in their eyes:

"There is something strange about England: it is too comfortable, too restful here! . . . The majority of people seem to be afraid of something: it is quite unaccountable. . . . What is it? This is very strange for a free country." And the dear wild birds fly home to wear themselves out in the struggle for the nation's political freedom and for a Russian Habeas Corpus. They don't realize that these alone would not satisfy

them; they want them in addition to the moral individual freedom which Russians already possess more than any other nation.

What the Russians are not able to digest are half-measures and compromises. Either endless endurance or bitter revolt (unless they approve of everything as it is, of course). "Very bad for you," says my friend, an Englishman. But he is mistaken: it would be very bad for him—but it is not for us. After all, nationalities should be allowed some individuality; this would not stand in the way of international peace. True friendship, like true love, is that founded on perfect mutual understanding. Nevertheless, I do not mean to imply that Russia's failings need be admired.

Both our countries are exceedingly interesting subjects for serious mutual study. A book written about England by an Englishman specially for the Russians might prevent our occasional jumping to erroneous conclusions. The other day a Russian lady, a mathematician and sculptor, after a whole year spent in England, mistook the English habit of self-control for a general atrophy of the nervous system. "No wonder," she thought: "cold baths, ever-open windows, and playing some sort of game at ball all the year round, will harden any nerve-tissues to such a degree that no subtle refined feelings, nothing temperamental, can possibly remain in them!"

On the other hand, even Mr. Maurice Baring, who has lived in Russia, and seems to know our country to a very considerable degree—even he makes a great

mistake when he says (in his book "The Russian People") that the Russians "have no initiative" and "have a fear of striking out a new line." I will venture to say, that even in the few articles collected in this volume—written with as much love and as much indignation for my country as it deserves—facts may be traced which will prove that this criticism is hardly fair. Where would we be now if we had "no initiative" and "a fear of striking out a new line"? With all her horrors and her drawbacks, Russia counts in her social life and even in her law some good points which the most advanced Englishman is still only cautiously contemplating from afar!

The Russians have no character-training and therefore no self-control in bad or good feelings, they have no stiffening to prevent them from flying beyond the limits, no business spirit, "no cement of hypocrisy"—to quote a Russian historian—but they also have no "fear of striking out a new line."

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome said to me once: "You Russians take most things extremely seriously." On another occasion I heard him say: "When a Russian likes you he tells you so."

These two brief remarks contain a great deal of subtle understanding, although Mr. Jerome spent only one week in Russia. But we think that this particular way of taking things has been developed in us quite inevitably—and most things in modern Russia should be taken seriously.

The second of his observations is as simple as it

is illustrative of Russian character. Of course we do! We can't help it and we can't see why we shouldn't.

There is one book written about Russia by an Englishman which is alive with the spirit of our nationality—"My Russian Year," by Mr. Rothay Reynolds. This author does not generalize. He evidently realizes that there are Russians who truly love their country, although they would never agree to cross themselves before the ikons in the east corner of Madame Novikoff's drawing-room in London and pray and sing with her for the Russian Emperor, which Mr. Stephen Graham seems to bring forward as a token of true love for Russia. If all Russians thought this to be the essential and right thing to do and considered Russia's awakening to be Russia's damnation, our country would speedily retrograde. However poetical, such a movement "of progress" would be somewhat ludicrous. As it is, her advancement is retarded by the pressure of old ignorance. It is this ignorance, that is obstructing the traditional modern undercurrent, which is so bitterly described in "Changing Russia." The author finds perverting influences which may be summarized as follows:

The popularity of a cheap illustrated paper, *The Universal Panorama,* which is spreading condensed knowledge for the million to the remotest corners of the land; the keen interest in the cinematograph shows—often instead of churchgoing; the great success in Russia of Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, Jerome K.

Jerome, W. W. Jacobs, and H. G. Wells; and the money-grubbing atmosphere of the "Lower Intelligentzia."

These accusations are somewhat startling. How can a population which has been kept in darkness for centuries suddenly develop enough taste to rise above an entertaining pictorial periodical representing various points of European achievements? Is such a taste (to my mind perfectly excusable) a sufficient reason to keep the masses from further enlightenment?

Equally arguable is the question whether the Russian Church in its present state could afford any entirely satisfactory counter-attraction to the cinematograph shows: the peasant's religion, with its extraordinary half-heathen conceptions, and the Russian clergy, with their extraordinary ignorance, were never powerful enough to keep the population from its scourge—drink. The latter has always been the curse of our country. Not only the village clergy share this national appetite for strong liquors, but monks also drink in their cells, chuckling over the forbidden pleasure. Considering this, it does not look as if the peasant should resolutely turn his back on the scanty enlightenment he can get through some "Universal Panorama," or even were cinematographs, and seek it in the Church which has never been a factor in his development. Surely the Moscow "People's University," the evening classes, the "House of Enlightenment," and the many other recent efforts of the culturists are not perverting the dear old world of the people's primitive ideas?

The accusation about the interest in modern English literature we fail to understand. It is but fair to add that all European classics have been translated and published over and over again, which is not bad for a country in the making.

As to the "Lower Intelligentzia living in an atmosphere of money such as one knows nothing of in England," the author fortunately contradicts himself in another part of his book, in relating his conversation with one of the representatives of that class: "With us" (says the young Russian) "it is songs and no money; with you, money and no songs." "That is about it," Mr. Stephen Graham agrees. Why should he agree if it were not rather a good description put into a nutshell? And why does he speak of "swallowing money, digesting money" as being the all-absorbing interest of a whole class—in his opinion a dangerously advancing class, bringing with it a sweeping degeneracy to the whole country? It is extremely seldom indeed that a Russian goes in for "swallowing money, digesting money."

Besides, the same pages also describe how all money is used by that disgusting Lower Intelligentzia for the sake of "show," but show is not "swallowing money." "Swallowing money, digesting money," gives an idea of avarice very unfamiliar to Russians, while the gramophones, the over-eating, the Paris toilettes, and the rest of the Russian bourgeoisie's delights are, in their inner nature, a nearer approach to the same "songs and no money" than to "money and no songs."

Very few Russians could honestly confess to the sensible, respectable vice of "digesting money." No, whatever the rank and class—we are not guilty of that. If we were, where would the well-known Russian hospitality come in?

Hardly any sphere of activity can be farther from the normal Russian mind than "business." This must sound like a paradox to an English reader. But with the Russians nearly everything is done not because it is good business, but as the result of some definite idea, devotion to some cherished individual theory. "*You can't cook kasha* with him*": this is a saying which is applied to people with whom it is difficult to accomplish any business—and, alas, there are many of them! No wonder that the Dutch, the English, and the Germans are gradually getting into their hands the whole management of industrial undertakings in Russia.

The enthralling passion amongst the Intelligentzia for one's own principles—not principles prescribed by any text-books, but those born of deep thought, sleepless nights, investigation, work and suffering—the passion for these principles manifests itself in every phase of life: political, social, artistic, and domestic. Some foreigners, methodical in their principles as in everything else, come to Russia and are bewildered by the buoyancy, the variety, the individualism, the endless evolutions of those "principles." "You are without principle," they say. As we are not quite devoid of

* Porridge of all kinds.

a sense of humour, we smile and leave them alone; and then, sometimes, we see that our guests find it all "charming," and seem at times to be inclined to reconsider their own fixed beliefs, which they have always supposed to be the only real ones.

The variety of individualities amongst the Russians, who do not know how to wear—and are not anxious to wear—a mask of uniformity, makes impossible any "pedantry that kills spontaneity," or "monotonous politeness that takes the place of buoyancy"—to use Diderot's expressions.

The disregard of feeling for extrinsic considerations often differs from the sensible point of view. For instance, when two young people of the poorer part of the middle class love each other and want to marry, they do so. It would seem ridiculous to them to wait for several years till the time comes when they can afford it.

"One has got to consider the children," is the reasonable English argument.

"But how can one waste several years of youth and happiness for the sake of so many more pounds a year?" is the Russian feeling.

The difference is caused by the fact that the English couple must have a restful home with many proper attributes of comfort attached to it—those for their specially arranged parties included; while the young Russians' home is happy with the work of man and wife, with the circle of their friends, who are not expected to wait for invitations, but look in at any time in the evening and are quite satisfied with a glass

of tea and a hearty talk late into the night. The hosts are happy in the possession of just one bedroom—their guests occasionally staying overnight on the sofa in the dining-room; and when there happen to be two girls and a man amongst them who live at a distance, and there are about twenty degrees of frost, the host makes a bed for himself on the floor by the dining-room couch, which is given to his comrade, while the three women arrange similarly fantastic beds in the only bedroom; and then the talking and laughter almost meet the sunrise! The cooking and the clearing away of the dishes also takes place "as it happens," the presence of the general servant making no difference.

"Awful mess," say the young English lady and gentleman.

"Very nice and simple," says the Russian couple.

It is pleasant to note Mr. Rothay Reynolds' insight and wit when he stops short before the most un-English, open, serious simplicity of our sentiments.

"One can hardly say that there are scandals in a society that regularizes the irregular with the formula, 'But they love each other.'"

Mr. Rothay Reynolds, naturally without being able to share this view entirely, nevertheless sees that in the Russian mind there is something humane and lofty about it. His true insight saves him from troubling over our "immoral" morals. This problem of civilization is indeed treated, in our land of free ideas and natural feelings, as it is not treated anywhere else. With

us people are judged by what they are in themselves, by their work, quickness of apprehension, their talents, and their gift of sympathy. Private relations between men and women are not interfered with. Whatever their *position sociale*, the Russians do not consider themselves supreme judges of the right to condemn men or women for their honest acknowledgment of their attachments, when these happen to be outside wedlock. In Russia one does not enjoy chatting as one does in Paris about other people's "mistresses" and their dresses in a sparkling conversation; one speaks openly and seriously of "civil" marriages in referring to unwedded couples; there is no marriage by registrar in Russia, and therefore one is either wedded in church or not wedded at all. But the common sense of public opinion has evolved the term "civil marriages." No one avoids the couple, whether this form of union is the result of circumstances, or, as is very often the case, of their principles. They do not think too little of love, but—in the majority of cases—too much. Their idea of love is truly lofty: they do not consider any *formal* ties absolutely necessary where there exist the great ties of true feeling. In the eyes of Russians, as in those of a contemporary English author with a somewhat exceptional point of view, "Love is divine, marriage is human"; that is why the simple Russian argument quoted by Mr. Rothay Reynolds made moralizing on his part impossible. He realized that in the eyes of Russians love was a sacrament in itself. In our country one does not boycott

those who are not wedded. Cases of unwedded but serious attachments are known and acknowledged from the top of the social scale to the bottom. It is only in court circles that they are intentionally ignored, for formality's sake.

Any hypocrisy of condemnation in cases of serious devotion is so far from the Russian mind that our society was shocked by the want of tact and understanding on the part of the Americans when they turned the cold shoulder on Gorki simply because he openly went to the United States with his unwedded wife. This pose on the part of the New Yorkers as judges and representatives of morality seemed to us ridiculous and most unfair.

From this humane national point of view have grown the recent legal enactments in which Russia is ahead of all countries. The new law concerning illegitimate children shows a distinct tendency to improve their position and to make it easier for their parents to give them the privileges which they naturally wish to bestow. First the official marriage of the parents is sufficient to legitimize the children who were born before the ceremony took place (whatever the reasons). From the very day of the marriage the formerly illegitimate children receive all rights and advantages enjoyed by those born in wedlock.

Formerly the Russian law permitted the adoption of any children except one's own illegitimate ones—and of none at all, when one had legitimate ones. Now this law is repealed. One's own illegitimate children

have the preference in every way. Even when a married man wants to adopt children born to him by another woman before his marriage he has only to acknowledge them and to get the consent of his legal wife and of his children born in wedlock, if these are of age. And he mostly does it. The promulgation and the popularity of these laws would be impossible if men and women shrank from acknowledging their children who were born out of wedlock. But they don't shrink from this: the natural feelings of love and duty are so unanimously understood, that the new law was the natural outcome of public opinion.

In the last summer vacation I was addressed by a young English lady teacher at a co-educational Russian school.

"We have two illegitimate children at our school! Everybody knows it—and no one objects to it!" she told me with the greatest surprise. "Their mother is known to be of a rather frivolous nature, too. Parents in England would not stand such a thing for one day; they would either take their own children away from that school, or make the headmistress expel the illegitimate ones."

Now, to us Russians this is a most unfair judgment; it is not the children's fault that they are illegitimate; and it is not a crime for which they should be deprived of education. Even their mother's manner of life does not concern the parents of the rest of the pupils. Again I must say that we shrink from condemning and preaching—even in the cases when it does not involve any

hypocrisy whatever. Simply and truly, it is the *ignoring* of the illegitimate children by their parents that is disgusting to a Russian mind.

Illegitimate children, then, are not boycotted—either by their parents, by society, or by the law. However cruel the Russian Government is in political cases, it is extraordinarily broad-minded and humane on this question.*

When a marriage for some reason or other happens to be pronounced unlawful and is dissolved by the law, the children of that marriage none the less retain the rights and privileges of legitimate children. In cases of divorce *both* parties may now marry again, with the sanction not only of the law but also of the Church. Their social position remains of course unaffected.

Let me now quote from the "Collections of Civil and Church Laws on Marriage and Divorce" (1912, 12th edition), which gives the opinions of *canonical* authorities who led the commission to the final moulding of the new laws.

"Once the non-guilty party receives the permission to marry again, it means that the bonds of the sacrament of the first marriage do not exist for him (or for her) any more. If they do not exist for one party, they cannot exist for the other one—because a union must needs have two members to form it, and if it is undone

* This principle carries even Russian officialdom to the length of naming the accused in a political trial "L. Volkenstein and her husband Dr. Kobeliak."

for one of them naturally it is undone for the other." And: "A punishment implying an unmarried life for the guilty person for ever can only lead him (or her) to further offences. *All men cannot receive this saying save they to whom it is given.* What can be obtained only by the chosen ones by means of great will and mortification should not be used as a punishment for ordinary people. The Church should tell them: *Neither do I condemn thee: Go and sin no more.* And the way to fulfil this commandment is shown in the words of the Apostle: *To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*"

Laws like this coming from a politically intolerant government—are not they also typically characteristic of the Country of Extremes?

The still existing Franco-English custom of "chaperoning" entirely fails to appeal to us. Our girls of all classes are perfectly free to continue the acquaintances they make and to meet young men where they like without supervision. Certainly, some extra romanticism results from this freedom; but a sensible, happy sociability and genuine comradeship are the chief results of this trust in the better nature of young people.* In cases where it comes to real love, the latter has certainly a better foundation of mutual understanding than could be obtained in the presence of a third party. The freedom in the surroundings of a Russian student-girl cannot be surpassed; yet her

* Mr. Stephen Graham's observations on this point are particularly welcome.

pure-mindedness and noble simple manners astonish the Western cultured man, who in his country asserts the necessity of restrictions for preserving purity! It is in this free, untrammelled spirit, with its views on what is noble and beautiful and what is not, that the national freshness and the young forces of the race lie.

However much there is to be done for the Russian people and by the Russian people, they will fight out their own salvation some day. Whenever there is a calm between the waves of restless activity, and intensity of feeling appears to be subsiding, there comes the voice of some poet accusing his generation of a lack of vigour. Such a one was the great Lermontoff, such the beloved Nadson. Bitter was their indignation:

"We hate and we love only casually, without sacrificing anything to hatred or to love" . . . "We criticize almost from the cradle, we contemplate life as if we were present at a feast of people who are strangers to us. . . ."

True to his Russian blood that same poet, however, gave vent in other verses to his own despair at finding no power to love for ever, seeing no sense in everlasting desires.

The later lyrist, Nadson, was always for "life—not death!" Hurt by indifference in his contemporaries, he calls out passionately:

"Cursed be the slumber that kills our forces. Oh for air, for space! For burning speeches! To live for life and not for death—the heart throbbing fully, the passions all aflame! . . . Cursed are the groans

of servile weakness. Light up, ye eyes! Unfold, ye wings!"

This may sound to a non-Slavonic ear a primitive outburst, but to Russians it is a noble cry. We cannot do things well by reasoning only. The advice of Ecclesiastes refers to us literally: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." *And when we don't—as in the present lull in the liberation movement —we ought to.*

An approach to Western civilization is certainly necessary; but, transported to Russian soil and mixed with the Slavonic leaven, Western ways will acquire some new forms.

The rude old saying runs: "What is good for a Russian is death to a German." Paraphrasing it, we may say that Russian views and laws on the subject of divorce and illegitimacy and the national tendency to place love above convention would startle English morality out of its rut. We are bound to look exceedingly naïve to the English people in our lack of any business spirit and, sometimes, even of common sense; primitive, too, in our sympathy for everything that is natural. But we in our turn cannot help being rather surprised at what we regard as pedantry in "morals" in this country—respect for convention which leads not only to self-control but also to an ostracism of offenders against convention, an attitude which we are unable to admire from a humane point of view.

As humaneness stands amongst the positive qualities of the Russians (as classified by Mr. Maurice Baring)

how could it allow of the naïve tyranny of "morals"? Either one or the other, it seems to us. Certainly there is a considerable amount of self-indulgence and excess going on side by side with the civil marriages; but the point is just this, that these two apparently opposite attitudes can and *do* exist openly side by side in Russia; while in this country, as it seems to us, freedom of choice in these matters is tacitly ignored; and the finest manifestation of it, which occurs when men and women do not need any formalities and would acknowledge and uphold the honesty of their relations on the strength of freedom of principles—this is simply not tolerated, *not allowed* to exist.

At the same time, Mr. Maurice Baring places in his category of Russian positive qualities "absence of hypocrisy" and "liberty of thought and *mœurs*." This brings out the difficulty of classifying the features of the Russian nature in little squares, so to speak. It is like the proverbial difficulty of men in general to understand the puzzling problem, woman. Every woman is perfectly clear to herself—nothing mysterious about her. So is Russia: she is distinct in black and white to herself; all contrasts, changes and extremes are sincere, and we plainly see our own roads in the midst of the complexity she presents to outsiders.

"Russians are following us and sitting, uninvited if welcome, guests at our table. They may sit there if they like, of course, but hadn't they, perhaps, better be going?" asks Mr. Stephen Graham in his book, "Changing Russia." To say nothing of the fact

that I never met with or heard of any such attitude towards us Russians in this country in the course of ten years of my life here, I don't think the Russians would think of saying such a thing with regard to the English. We have any numbers of them and they are never treated otherwise than with a sincere hospitality, whether by peasants, Intelligentzia, officials or aristocracy, however critical our guests may be. But I think that those English who can write about us would be the more welcome if they would write about their own people as well: this would be of great value to us, who desire, but are naturally not always able, to understand the subtle impulses and motives of a nation which seems to be organically so different from ours.

I will allow myself to touch upon one more typically Russian principle, which makes our educated classes regard one item of English life as a brutal survival of the past. This is the caning and "spanking" at English schools. It seems to be regarded in England as a matter of course, usually discussed from a humorous standpoint. Now, that is a matter which we cannot help taking seriously: to us, beating in every form is inseparable from the idea of serfdom and political prisons. For the last half-century corporal punishment, outside these institutions, has been regarded only as an atrocious breach of the law; and a reactionary member of the present Duma is the only man who dared to try and introduce it again—to the indignation of the whole country. We should certainly not forget

that in England it is a different sort of affair, remaining in the hands of parents, schoolmasters, and their assistants, perfectly simple and homely, so to speak. Quite so. And yet . . . . may there not be a touch of something *abgelebt* in it? Even for England? We fail to understand it.

But we like England. The longer we live here the more we get attached to it; and I hope we help our compatriots who remain at home to realize that the old-fashioned continental idea about the English egotism is wrong: for we find that a genuine kindness *in everyday life* is a national feature in this country; and, what is more, we find that emotion and temperament are also here—somewhat cautiously locked up, perhaps, but it needs only a hearty knock at the door and out they come. To say nothing of the fact that we instinctively respect the English "backbone," which we ourselves often so pathetically lack, and find the British sense of humour irresistibly infectious.

I must apologize for the abundance of my remarks about England, when I am supposed to be speaking about Russia; but these comparisons come in involuntarily and inevitably. The attitude of Russians towards English manners may throw an additional scintilla of light on our national character, and may add, I hope, to the broader rays of investigation turned upon the latter by English writers or our own.

Thus the Country of Extremes is growing in her own manner—never afraid of "striking out a new line,"

but at the same time maintaining most grotesque survivals of the sombre past.

Danger would set in for Russia only if the flow of the genuine sap of the land should cease. If the national spirit fell asleep, hypnotized by the ignorance of the past, it would be a hopeless thing. But happily the nation—through blunders and struggle, probably through more acute suffering—will continue its growth, however spasmodic that growth may seem.

We are miles behind some other countries in many respects; but there are a few points in the development of Russia of which she may perhaps be proud; however, she is not. Her best impulses, her hard-earned achievements, her greatest personalities are taken for granted at home. For a Russian it needs several years of life abroad to realize his country's chief national features: her spontaneity and her capacity for going to extremes—good or bad. These may appear more than startling when seen through Western eyes; but Russians at home and abroad will continue to work for the further development of the country which has given them birth.

II

THE PAST OF THE COSSACKS *

Hail, beloved native land;
Hail, ye forests dreamy;
Hail, the midnight nightingale,
Wind, and steppes, and cloudbanks!
COUNT A. TOLSTOI.

IN Western Europe the Russian *Kazaki* (Cossacks) are usually known (though wrongly) as a "tribe," as a certain section of the Russian Army, generally used when a particularly dashing and courageous force is needed in war, and, especially, as a cruel and

* Authorities on whose special works this article is founded:—Kostomaroff, Grushinsky, Jitietzky, Markevitch, Evarnitzky, Myshetzky. Also the French military engineer, Guillome de Beauplan, in the service of Sigismund III of Poland in the seventeenth century, who spent seventeen years in Little Russia, and whose works on it are translated into five languages.

The above-named Russian historians had several sources on which to draw for their facts and conclusions: Public documents, such as Memoires of Erich Lassota, delegate from the Austrian Court to the Cossack's Setch in 1594; Acts of successive Russian Governments; Hetmans' and Atamans' instructions to their Cossacks, their correspondence with Russian and foreign authorities, judicial judgments, and commercial treaties with neighbouring countries, memoirs and private correspondence of Polish and Russian landlords of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; stories, contemporary with the periods they describe; and lastly, traditions and Cossack songs, still unaltered in their essential features.

crushing means of curbing the enthusiasm of an unarmed revolutionary crowd.

This latter conception is perfectly right as regards the Kazaki of to-day. But it is quite unfair to their past; and even a brief sketch of that past can show some most unexpected contrasts—for, in the days of yore, the Kazaki were ardent champions of freedom and defenders of the oppressed.

It has never been our ambition to become a warlike nation. Russians were never warriors *par excellence;* and throughout the horrors and tumults of our history the Russian nature remained cheerful though philosophical, idealistic though sarcastic in its realism, and, if anything, too patient. The Russian's good nature will suffer him to stand much oppression without revolt, and only when things become utterly unbearable he goes, as we say, "where his eyes glance," leaving all behind him and having nothing in view, but ready to adapt himself to any new surroundings. These typical traits in the national character—suffering without revolt, and flight when suffering becomes unendurable—largely accounted for the appearance of the "Kazachestvo." This word implies all events in Cossack history, everything to do with the men and their life; it covers the whole existence of this unique collection of people, considering them all as one entity, as an embodiment of a certain idea.

Originally, the Kazaki were passionate lovers of freedom who went forth to find it in the wilderness. There were many reasons for going—local, political,

psychological. There were no mountains to call them back; and, to beckon them on, there were the vast, vast steppes of Southern Russia, mostly covered with a huge growth of splendid virgin grass, above which only the head and shoulders of a mounted man could be seen, and in the depths of which game could be caught, in some places, literally by hand. Here and there, too, were virgin forests; here and there *balki*, those great cracks in the soil, miles and miles long, and hundreds of feet deep, with a thick growth of shrubbery at the bottom, forming natural ambushes; whilst all over the country spread a network of rivers, with their numberless tributaries, backwaters, whirlpools, marshes, and reed-covered islands.

All this was inviting and tempting enough for those who could not submit and suffer any more, and were longing for personal liberty. After the repeated invasions of Tartars in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the whole of the south of Russia remained devastated. The "mother of Russian towns," Kiev, was destroyed, with all its trade and political importance. A new State was growing up north, round Moscow; the princes were gradually losing their former position of hired warriors, and were usurping absolute rule over the land and people. In early Russia there existed a national organ of self-government, the *Vetche*, an assembly of all, old and young, rich and poor, man and woman. This Vetche was not allowed to appear in the new parts of Russia. The whole so-called "feudal" period was only one pro-

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longed struggle between each self-governing centre and the new-fangled and ever-spreading doctrine of monarchical centralization. In the north, the two great commercial republics of Novgorod and Pskov led the opposition to this growth of autocracy, right up to the end of the fifteenth century, when Ivan III overpowered "Lord Great Novgorod, who was his own Master." But in the south, where all was ruined, there was no constitutional strife. The Tartars remained in the Crimea and on the shores of the Caspian, hovering to and fro, like birds of prey. All the rich and noble fled to Lithuania and Poland. These two countries interfered, and for centuries the south-west of Russia belonged officially to one or to both. There appeared a new Russo-Lithuanian Principality, now at war, now at peace with Poland. The Principality of Kiev was abolished, and "Hetmans," appointed by Polish kings, were introduced. In fact, there is no wonder that this part of the land, under so many guardians, acquired the name of "Little Russia." New small towns, estates, and villages came into existence, but their aristocracy was apt to mimic the customs of the rich Poles, who were practically thriving on the pillage of their own lower classes. The luxurious habits of the Polish nobility were notorious. They are well illustrated by a characteristic story about a magnate, who once at midsummer had a large party staying with him at his castle. After all conceivable pleasures of the season had been exhausted, he thought of a sledging drive. Thousands of serfs were made to work during the

night, and in the morning the guests beheld all the country roads covered with a thick layer of snow. A glorious sledge-party took place—but the snow was salt!

In the seventeenth century both in Poland and Russia persecution of the peasantry became appalling; untold horrors were perpetrated. The oppressors had such powers of life and death as to make the Polish population, as well as the Russian, long for a breath of freedom; and the boundless cruelty of those who ran away into the wilderness and formed their own laws was a natural answer to their instructors—the barbarity of the Tartar East, the fanaticism of the Polish West, the crushing autocracy of the Russian North. The south also lay barred. The Turks, having settled on the Balkan Peninsula, began, in their turn, raiding South Russia. In spite of the geographical freedom of the steppes, the country seemed to be practically surrounded by oppressing forces.

On the part of Russia herself, there were no religious persecutions and no raids; there were growing, however, the omnipotent power of the Russian princes, a serfdom based on private exchange, and an organized system of land taxation (taxes were not imposed on those owning the land, but on the ploughmen themselves, and the very word "ploughmen," *tiaglyi chelovieck*, came to mean the "taxed man"), which only increased the desire of the landlords to mass numbers of agricultural labourers on their lands. To crown all, Byzantine Christianity had been forced upon Russia,

bringing with it all the defects of the Eastern Roman Empire; worst of all, the so-called "domestic despotism." The power of the eldest man in the family became boundless, crushing the personal importance of all younger than he; for instance, his sons' brides were first brought to him. The living will of the people was struggling against all this; the primitive instinct of communism awoke, and Kazachestvo—the Russian knighthood—grew up.

Men flocked in thousands to the south; mostly Russians, next Poles, some men from the minor Slavonic tribes, even Tartars. In several instances men were known to have come from countries as distant as England.* They called themselves Kazaki, a Tartar word meaning free men, free warriors, or guards, which can be traced back to the eleventh century.

At first their personal feelings and requirements made them provide for themselves and guard their own liberty only. They had game, fish, and fruit, from the rivers and from the steppes, which they called their father and mother, but they needed ammunition, clothing, horses. To get these they had to attack Tartar camps and caravans; soon they learnt their cunning and cruel military art; they became marvellous shots, riders, and swimmers, able to swim across wide rivers holding on to the manes of their horses with one hand, and carrying their weapons in the other, or between their teeth. Their horses were famous for

* Thus it can be seen that one can hardly denote this conglomeration of people as a tribe.

their swiftness and endurance; a badly wounded horse used to be found again by his master, strong and faithful, even after he had had to leave him in the steppes for several winter months, when the grass lies buried under many feet of snow.

Getting stronger and stronger, and more and more numerous through the influx of new-comers, the Kazaki became in reality the only fighting force that kept back the Tartars, and gradually all minor aims and personal feelings blended together in unity of purpose and principle. They protected the peoples in the countries from which they had themselves fled, from the enmity of the Tartars, and they saved thousands of Christian boys, girls, and women from slavery in the East. For that purpose, the Kazaki used to penetrate, disguised, even into the palaces of Constantinople itself.

From the sixteenth century the Kazaki grew in numbers, and greatly in importance. The Lithuanians were the first to engage them as guards on their frontiers, and it was not long before the Kazaki were feared, respected, and wanted everywhere. Every nation could have the help of the Kazachestvo if the Kazaki thought its cause right, but nothing could induce them to come and help where conditions did not fit in with their code of honour. Poland first realized that these men could hurt or help as they pleased, and the King Stephen Batori suggested a regular organization of the whole Kazachestvo; he wanted six thousand men to enlist, who would have

regular pay from the Polish Government and would receive the rights of the Polish gentry; but that was just what the Kazaki despised, and the scheme never worked to any considerable extent.

There were two classes into which the Kazachestvo chiefly moulded itself—the "Village" Kazaki and the "Zaporojskoe" Kazachestvo.

The village Kazaki lived in their own settlements, or amongst ordinary country people, all over the south of Russia; they joined the others only in the great general council, *Rada*, and in wars; then their combined army amounted to some seventy thousand men. The Zaporojskoe Kazachestvo, a community of about twelve thousand men, was the heart and soul of all the Kazachestvo, where all that was strangest, noblest, and most typical in it was concentrated. The permanent headquarters was the *Setch*, a movable settlement, usually situated beyond the cataracts on the river Dnieper.

Between wars (to which there always came a call from the Setch), the Village Kazaki came considerably into touch with ordinary country life. They cultivated the land, but even in this occupation they differed from the peasants: they made all governments around them acknowledge the fact that they were the guardians of the country, and therefore should pay no land taxes; they absolutely refused to be called ploughmen, and acquired the name "Free" Kazaki, which they really were, seeing that they could never be turned into serfs, that they paid no taxes, and that

they used their freedom entirely as they chose. But it was impossible for a Village Kazak to come and live with his comrades in the Setch unless he joined this select community for good. He had to return after every war to his home in the village, sometimes badly wounded, sometimes laden with his share of booty, but always full of enthusiasm. His children were brought up to entertain the greatest respect for the Kazachestvo: when a boy was born, his father used to lay his sabre alongside the little body, saying, "Well, Kazak, here is the only thing you will have from me wherewith to take care of yourself and of others."

From time immemorial, along the rivers and along the seashores in the south-east of Russia, there wandered numerous bands of nomads, who would not submit to any organized life; together with the Kazaki already mentioned, they represented the ancient element of the old free Russia which was but slowly yielding in her contest against the growing power of the State. These bands did not form communities, and were really robbers on the waterways and trade-routes; but the simple Russian people never called them anything but "fine brave fellows," and our folk-lore is full of these heroes. The peasants themselves suffered from these vagabonds, but they only needed a clever leader to infect with their enthusiasm the whole oppressed population, and rouse it to a gigantic insurrection against the State, in the name of "Land and Liberty."

Even the organized Western Kazaki were not far-seeing politicians, and always considered the problem

of the moment only. That is why they helped Russia against Poland, Poland against Turkey, Turkey against the Tartars, and always the Russian and Polish lower classes against the Russian and Polish nobility. Thus Russia herself more than once saw the wild waves of the Kazachestvo roll over the land, who always thought that they were doing the right thing, even if it were a matter of making or unmaking monarchs. Such was the case when they helped the Poles to bring to Moscow the mysterious Dmitri, believing that this young man, who appeared from no one knew where, was the real heir to the Russian throne; and whether he was the son of the Tsar or not (this is still a debatable point), he could never have had his little day on the throne but for the help of the Kazachestvo.

On the other hand, when in the days of Ivan the Terrible (the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth), detached bands of the Eastern Kazaki penetrated into and conquered the unknown area of Siberia, they delivered of their own accord their hard-won prize into the hands of the Tsar, who gained all the honour and advantage of the conquest.

Later, under the rule of Peter the Great's father, when autocracy got the upper hand, when serfdom was finally established and conscription introduced, a tremendous upheaval took place in the east. Under the leadership of one Stenka Rasin, a young fellow of exceptional influence over the people, the whole peasantry and the Village Kazaki of the Don and the Volga rose, with the wild cry of "Land and

Liberty." But the rising lacked organization, and turned into merciless massacre and pillage. Nothing was achieved, and Rasin himself was tortured and quartered. His personality was invested by the people with a halo of the fascination of terror, and his name is still a byword with them. There is a song about an elopement of his with a Persian princess: he drinks and sings with his robbers in a luxurious sculling-boat on the river Volga, with the princess at his side, when he suddenly imagines that the river requires a pretty present from him, and he throws the girl into the blue waters. According to folk-lore, he "knew a word" that made cannon-balls and bullets shun him; he used to fly in a "flying-boat" from river to river; his riches remain there where he buried them, and nobody could ever find them; when he was put by the soldiers into a cage, he asked for a drink of water—when this was given him, he poured the water over his head, and the cage fell to pieces and he escaped; when he was put into gaol in Moscow, he said "a word which he knew," and the irons fell off his hands: then he made on the wall with a piece of charcoal a drawing of a little boat, and waves, and river banks, and sculls, "as it all ought to be"; and when the drawing was ready he stepped into that little boat and was off! The Russian folk believed that he could not die: neither earth nor water would accept him; especially as he had had the anathema pronounced over him. (It is still actually pronounced on the first Sunday of Lent in all the churches of Russia.) They say he is

still alive inside a mountain; he is all grown over with white moss, and will appear and "try again," when the wax candles in the Russian churches shall have been replaced by tallow ones! (This means the last degree of degeneration.) Meanwhile, he wanders about secretly, helping all homeless people who have no passport! . . .

During their two hundred and odd years of substantially free existence, the Kazaki were for the most part officially subjects of the Russian Tsar, occasionally of the Polish King, for some time even of the Turkish Sultan; but their idea of being subjects was to obey of their own free will, and if they did not approve of a government they simply went and fought it.

So much for the *raison d'être* of the Kazachestvo and the spirit pervading it. Now for its very nucleus, the "Setch beyond the Rapids."

The Setch did not necessarily lie near the geographical centre of the Kazak domains; it usually occupied an almost unapproachable island, thickly overgrown with reeds, shrubs, and wood, somewhere on the lower course of the river Dnieper.

The Turks once risked a voyage up its mouth, and were caught by the Kazaki in the maze of wooded islands like rats in a trap. The Polish Government tried more than once to make an investigation of these islands and of the steppes belonging to the Setch, but their efforts were fruitless. The exact position of the Setch was changed eight times in the course of the two centuries during which it was *the* home of the organized Kazachestvo.

There was never any woman in that home; any man who brought even his mother or his sister, was hanged at once; so that it was not a thing of frequent occurrence. The community was in the main composed of men who owned nothing, and who had blotted the past out of their lives when coming to lead a new and free life among their equals. Some came driven by hatred of the miseries and tortures of the lives it had been their lot to live; some simply attracted by a life of adventure, by dreams of robbing Turks and Tartars of their silks, harness, and beautiful armour; others, men of learning and superior intellect, in search of consolation for offended pride or love, for ambitions that were frustrated and for hopes that had failed. There were also typical Russians in quest of an outlet for their fabulous strength and energy; and lastly, criminals who wished to save themselves from deserved punishment; but the unwritten laws of the Kazachestvo were so clear, so severe, and so wonderfully carried out, that even this element caused no degeneration.

As rank and riches were regarded with contempt, anyone could join the Setch, but the new-comer had to submit to the following laws:

Complete chastity and celibacy after joining the Setch.

Orthodox creed. Former religion did not matter; but the unchristened ones had to be baptized.

Allegiance to Russia.

The South Russian dialect for all.

It has already been explained how they understood

allegiance to a throne, and how they challenged Russia herself; and only the law of one language, one creed, showed the keenness of their nationality and the predominance of Russian blood.

The law demanding complete celibacy made the numbers of the Kazachestvo depend entirely on the numbers of new-comers; there was never a lack of men who came in freely; but besides, the Kazaki took great delight in bringing converts, and in keeping and bringing up boys, most of whom were sent to the Setch by their fathers, the Village Kazaki, whilst others were children left homeless after the wars. Prisoners of war were never exploited for service, but either sent away to big towns, or set free, if a heavy ransom could be found. Schools were instituted for the boys; the teachers were usually men who happened to have been at church schools, or, later, at Jesuit colleges, and therefore were adepts in that elaborate literary style which used to surprise foreign Powers when carrying on negotiations with this most desirable army.*

No oaths, no references were demanded from a stranger, and no questions as to his past life were asked of him; he simply came to the ataman (the elected chief) with the greeting:

"Good morrow."

"Good morrow to thee also. Dost believe in Christ?"

* The interest they took in that particular art is vividly depicted in T. Ricpin's picture.

"I do."

"And in the Holy Trinity?"

"I do."

"Well, cross thyself!"

The stranger crossed himself.

"'Tis well. Go, choose a hut where thou wouldest sleep."

Then the new Kazak was shown his place in one of the large *kureni* (huts) and told:

"Here is thy home, three paces long and two paces wide; and when thou shalt die, we will make it smaller."

Kureni were built either of wood or of rush hurdles, covered with a thick layer of clay, sometimes with horseskins over the thatched roofs. Each hut consisted of one long room, that could accommodate a few hundred men standing or sitting; in it were a clay floor, a primitive fireplace at one end for cooking, round windows, a very long narrow deal table fixed on wooden trestles, with narrow benches on either side, whilst another row of wooden benches along the walls were bedsteads and "bedding" for fifty or sixty men. Artistic weapons adorned the clay walls, and a clay jug hung in front of the fireplace for collecting voluntary contributions to the next day's meals. No stores of food, no private property, were allowed in the huts. All that the Kazaki possessed was kept in a small shed.

The food was plain; it consisted for the most part of flour, either roasted or mixed with cold water; some

fish; *kasha*, a gruel made of some kind of cereal with lard; and a favourite sweet dish, a mixture of all kinds of dried fruit, with spirit and honey poured over it. During a war, the Kazak was quite satisfied with a slice of uncooked horseflesh, kept under the saddle "to keep it warm."

Whenever a new Kazak joined the Setch, his old name was replaced by a new one; this was done for two reasons: the South Russians have a keenly developed sense of humour, and as any little peculiarity attracts their attention, they delight in giving nicknames, which are particularly illustrative; secondly, if the Polish or Russian crowns were to search for some Ivanov or Pshepalski, he was gone, not to be found, and the Kazaki most seriously replied that a fellow called "One coat and a half," or "Pour out quickly," had joined the Setch, but no Ivanov or Pshepalski.

There was no organized training, no compulsory drill, no manœuvres; life itself, Nature, and their traditions gave them their training. With the exception of a few elected officers, ataman, scribe, and judge, there were, in time of peace, no distinctions between the men in the Setch; only the bravest and the most experienced were treated with special respect. But for periods of active warfare, a Kazak was elected to command each hundred men; his power was absolute. Several hundreds formed a regiment, with a colonel at its head, a temporary officer, elected for one campaign only. The Kazachestvo had some artillery and infantry, but its chief strength lay in its superb cavalry. By

raiding the Turkish shores, the Setch annoyed the Sultan to such an extent that Poland was in constant fear of his vengeance, and frequently complained to Russia, demanding that the Setch be kept quiet. This was, however, impossible. The whole fleet of alert "sea-gulls" again and again appeared along the Turkish coast. There were sixty or seventy men in each of these rowing-boats, which were also rigged with sails, and built by the Kazaki themselves. The fleet used to approach the alien beach under the cover of night, the boats being, if necessary, sunk low in the water; the armed force then rushed inland and attacked the villages, seizing all that was worth having; the horses captured from the natives then bore the successful raiders back to the shore.

Large trading ships belonging to the Turks were served in the same bold way. The "sea-gulls" swam noiselessly right up to their bows, the Kazaki swarmed on deck and, surprising the warders of the cargo in their beds, looted the vessel.

It was a curious fact that they carried on trade extensively with the surrounding States, whether friendly or hostile. Through the Kazak area wound the solitary trade-routes, from Asia to Poland and from Russia to Turkey; and from the earliest days in the history of the Kazachestvo there were regular co-operative guilds of men who undertook the carrying of raw materials to the south and of Byzantine luxuries to the north. They moved slowly through the country with long rows of carts, pulled by specially selected

oxen; the leading cart had the best pair of white beasts, with their horns gilt and a wax candle fixed and lit between them. Foreign traders who came to the Kazak markets told of the marvellous honesty which prevailed: any stranger could leave all his money and goods in the middle of a street in a Kazak settlement, and nothing would ever be touched. The ransom for the prisoners of war, and the tolls collected at the ferries and bridges, formed the two chief sources of income of the Kazachestvo.

To return to the Setch itself. Several dozens of the kureni, or huts, formed the dwellings in the Setch. The spaces between them were cleared, levelled, and beaten out quite smooth, so that one could dance, or sleep with arms and legs comfortably outstretched under the blue sky, and enjoy the wind and sun. No little shops or booths were allowed within the area of the huts; they formed a kind of suburb, under the management of Jews and Tartars, a place of continual bustle and noise; but no women were allowed there, just as entrance was forbidden them to the central Setch itself. Between the stalls and workshops, in hundreds of little booths, were men sewing coats and boots, making powder and shot, forging metals, working leather, baking bread, selling pipes, tobacco, and an extraordinary medley of small articles which, originally looted by the Kazaki themselves, had been sold to these hawkers. Most of these traders were not Kazaki, but tradesmen and artisans, also runaways, who swarmed round the warriors, as these would not

degrade themselves by petty occupations. Any amount of booty was brought into the Setch and was divided equally among the Kazaki; but it was their own business whether to keep the things or to let them go into the hands of shop- and stall-keepers. Superb productions of Eastern art and manufacture were most joyfully exchanged for tobacco or *horilka,** at home, when the intervals of peace lasted too many months.

Drinking was a formidable item of life in the Setch, but not outside it; in war it was a crime. At home it was allowed to any extent: drinking was part of the merriment—the wild exuberance of life—of men who had two treasures, freedom and comradeship.

It was a quaint sight, the Setch. Those long, plain, thatched huts, on the huge flat grounds, with cannon here and there; everywhere, whether in this clean part of the Setch or in the ring of commercial suburbs, groups of independent Kazaki philosophers enjoying the day-long idleness, silently admiring the river and the skies and the steppes, or singing great songs, or playing string instruments, smoking their pipes, drinking and joking, or dancing so vigorously that the ground trembled under the stamping of their top-boots.

But it must not be imagined that the individuals who formed these masses all wore the same kind of dress. A most fascinating variety pervaded the groups. A shirt and a pair of trousers, the latter "as wide as

* "Horilka" is a South Russian word for "vodka," which is a grain spirit.

A SCENE IN THE "SETCH"

From the painting by J. E. Riepin

the Black Sea," and the more folds the smarter; these were soaked in fish-oil when new, and dried: they were then worn till they fell to pieces; very frequently a splendid coat of the best possible cloth with gold embroidery, purposely smeared with tar, to show their contempt for bare-faced vanity; occasionally a fur coat, and, in the midst of a hot summer, a favourite astrachan cap; top-boots in all imaginable colours; pieces of silk instead of stockings, but sometimes the feet were bare and acquired all the virtues of leather itself. Here and there bare back and shoulders, with strips of luxurious robes thrown carelessly over them, or even a woman's jacket that had got to the Setch in the pell-mell of things. But always a most artistic assortment of arms: it was the ambition of each Kazak to have his sabre not only sharp enough to cut the enemy in two, but of a perfect finish: there was fine silver work on pistols, harness, rifles, and even on pipes. A Kazak called his sabre his "sister" or his "sweetheart," and never used it against the Tartars or Turks. It was "too good for them." But he had so many other weapons that the Kazachestvo excelled in this respect the contemporary armies of the West: each man was supplied with a rifle, a lance, a sabre, and three or four pistols; frequently also he carried a bow and arrows, an axe, a dagger and a *nagaika* (a whip, which is still notorious—but in a new way).

Finally, the unique appearance of the Kazak was completed by his hair; he wore a moustache, and

just one wisp on the crown of his shaven head, which was called *choob*; both the choob and the moustache were points of ambition, the proper way being to wear them so long that they could be wound round the ears out of the way.

At least once a year all the Little Russian Kazachestvo assembled for the Rada, the general council. A few days beforehand the signal for assembly was given from the Setch. Cannon were fired; the neighbouring villages heard the reports, and the order was passed on to the furthest settlements of the Village Kazaki. The council opened with a church service, which lasted a whole morning, as the Kazaki were very devout and had faith in all the old traditions of the Greek Church; next came the mid-day meal, after which the sound of cymbals called to the large square tens of thousands of men, amongst whom there were frequently foreign delegates, sent by their States to plead for their interests. The chiefs appeared with the attributes of their power: the ataman carried a large mace, the judge a silver seal, the scribe a pen and inkpot, and the hut chiefs their canes. All of them bowed to the assembly, and took up their positions in the enormous circle formed by the crowds. The roofs of the kureni all around were covered by Kazaki. Then the discussions began.

Anyone who thought he had something to say came to the centre of the empty space and delivered his oration. If it was the business of electing the heads of the hundreds and the colonels for war, no time was

wasted; the majority decided and the chiefs never interfered to alter any decision. But when it was the question of electing the chiefs themselves, all those who were nominated had to withdraw and wait in the huts. After the elections the chosen men were called for and led back to the square. It was etiquette to decline the honour, and the men actually struggled and kicked against being led out; but after much pulling and pushing, and many energetic expressions, which all meant that the men were really wanted and had to come, they were at last brought into the square. Standing there they bowed and thanked the people, after which the eldest Kazaki smeared their faces with tar and mud, in order "that they should not give themselves airs." Once elected, a man kept his post for a year, when he had to present a report; and it occasionally happened that the Kazachestvo hanged the man if not satisfied with his work. Only the "Hetman of Little Russia and the Kazachestvo" was elected for life, and usually died on the battlefield.

The Rada decided not only questions of war or peace and of political alliances, but also important home affairs, such as a fair distribution of fishing, hunting, and salt-mining districts between the Village Kazaki every year; and executions of offenders against the laws of the Kazachestvo. These laws were never written: the Kazaki used to say that writing them would only create muddles, and that it was very easy to remember the laws if one was willing enough to obey them. If not, one was free to leave at any

time. While in the Setch, a man was expected to remember the following:

That for the first and smallest theft he would be hanged.

That for deserting his post in war he would be shot.

That for the first drink outside the Setch, when at war, he would be drowned or shot.

That for bringing into the regions of the Setch a woman he would be hanged.

That for assaulting a woman anyhere he would be hanged.

That for any other offence against the moral purity of the Setch he would be hanged.

Minor offences, such as quarrelling or not paying debts, were punished by breaking arms and legs. Homicide was punished by burying the criminal alive, with the coffin of the victim on the top of him. Not very lenient laws! And yet these men called themselves, and were, free, because they made the laws themselves.

But a Kazak condemned to death was allowed to go and live elsewhere if he could hear of a girl willing to marry him. This sometimes occurred, but it also happened more than once that the man found the girl that turned up in the name of mercy not beautiful enough, and thought death sweeter.

The Kazaki's contempt for suffering and indifference towards death were marvellous. One of their famous leaders ended his career in Constantinople. He was old, and was caught by the Turks and hung on

an iron hook by a rib, in order that the population could see his slow death, and enjoy it. But it turned out to be much too slow and much less of an enjoyment than they expected: the old colonel never fainted and never gave in for a moment, turning round and swinging on his hook. For two whole days and two nights he kept on abusing and cursing the Turks—their creed, their politics, their customs; until they could not bear it any longer and shot him dead.

If to such physical courage we add marvellous honesty, generosity, comradeship, ingenuity, good nature, morality, humour, and love for all that is beautiful, we find that the existence of the Kazachestvo was even a more complicated thing than life is everywhere; because, although they were an easygoing sort of people in some ways—for example, as regards laziness and drink—they all the same lived up to a combination of social and moral ideals which stood unrivalled in European history.

It was a strange fact that many of the Kazaki, when growing too old for war, instead of retiring from the Setch to the villages, used to go to spend the rest of their lives in the peaceful shelter of monasteries. This was done without any gloomy feelings, but with the usual open heart of a Kazak, and with his usual jollity: loads of food, and especially drink, were provided for the occasion, and anyone who cared could see the old fellow off. He mounted his favourite horse and had a procession of several hundred men, who without any hurry moved towards some chosen

monastery, sometimes two or three days' journey off. In the course of that time the heartiest merrymaking went on, until all the singing, drinking, and dancing crowd approached the gates of the quiet resort. . . . The gates were opened half-way by one of the monks.

"Who's there?"

"Kazak. I am come to pray for my sinful soul." And an absolutely new kind of world swallowed up the old warrior. They were never rejected and sent away; and that shows that the flexible Russian nature, perfectly able to fit in with new surroundings, was still there.

In the second half of the seventeenth century an organized revolt of the whole Kazachestvo against Poland took place. Under the leadership of a clever and educated man, Bogdan Hmelnitzki, one of their former colonels, the Kazaki claimed the freedom of all Russian churches in the south-west of the country, and of the people, from the economic tyranny of the Jews, the horrible rule of the Polish landlords and officials. But the Polish oligarchy felt nothing but hatred towards the Kazachestvo, towards the miserably ignorant Russian clergy, and towards their own slaves, who dared to revolt.

Bloodshed began. Neither of the sides needed instruction in cruelty. Hmelnitzki was not a careless leader of a disorderly insurrection. He roused all the south, even the Caucasians, and made an alliance with the Tartars. The power of Poland was broken. But the revolt cost too much blood. The Tartars turned traitors; Hmelnitzki, in pity for his people, offered the

annexation of all Little Russia and the Kazachestvo to Moscow. After much reluctance the offer was accepted; and it was officially arranged that the Kazachestvo would retain its self-government and its influence in the country, "under the suzerainty of Moscow." The new status was one of deception. The old struggles went on. The Tsar, Peter the Great's father, even made a hurried alliance with Poland, hoping to be elected king. No sooner had Hmelnitzki found out his mistake than a large new scheme had to be undertaken, as he hoped to create an independent Kazak country. His death stopped any progress in that direction. Little Russia remained annexed to Moscow. The knot remained tied: it needed Peter the Great to cut that knot; and he did it in his Macedonian way. Under the pretext of treachery on the part of the Kazachestvo, Peter razed the Setch to the ground.

The treachery was supposed to have taken place under Mazeppa, a Hetman who had been elected under pressure from the Russian Court—this was the first instance of a Hetman who was not freely chosen at the Setch. Mazeppa, one of the Russian gentry brought up at the Polish Court, was never a true Kazak at heart. A man of great cunning and ambition, one who used his personal fascination for his private purposes, he certainly could not attain popularity among the Kazaki; but he managed to mislead even the clear mind of Peter the Great, who refused to believe that he was false, and several honest Kazaki lost

their heads for "spreading false rumours" about him. Mazeppa led Peter to believe that the Kazachestvo was ready to revolt at any moment, and was kept in subordination only through his ability. He tried to lessen its numbers in every possible way, and to nourish party strife among the men. Peter built fortresses and towns quite close to the Setch, used their regiments for his wars in the north, and also for his enormous engineering works. Those were hard times for the Kazachestvo. They hated Mazeppa, as a Polish lord, and as the official Russian leader. But in spite of this, he succeeded in sitting on the fence for some twenty years; and when he saw Charles XII of Sweden approaching and menacing Russia, who was cracking and moaning in the hands of her builder, he decided to run the risk of joining the invader with only four thousand men. Just at that moment Peter entrusted him with the command of all the Kazak cavalry, and was furious to find his castle empty; for the Hetman, after pretending for two days that he was ill and dying, had fled in haste to avoid the Tsar's messengers. But Mazeppa's game was lost. If all the Kazachestvo had joined the Swedes, Peter would never have won the epoch-making battle of Poltava. But he beat the Swedes hollow with his newly trained regiments, because the bulk of the Kazachestvo remained neutral. Charles, still a hero, and Mazeppa, now a discovered coward, fled to Turkey, where Mazeppa soon died.

The Little Russians never liked the idea of being

under the absolute rule of the north, and they did not favour the scheming of Peter. Yet they remained quiet when they had the chance of siding with a strong enemy, Charles, who went about promising peace and freedom. By instinct, friendship with Russia was kept up; this being due to the identity of their creed with that of the Russians, and to the fact that they hated Mazeppa. But neutrality was not appreciated; on the contrary, all Kazaki suffered for the treachery of their official chief. The Kazachestvo was deprived of all that it loved and honoured; the Setch was bombarded and ruined. The inhabitants were partly turned into ploughmen and partly sent to the Far East. Some fled to Turkey, where they remained Turkish subjects between the years 1709 and 1734. Only the registered regiments of the Village Kazaki were left to fight for the Tsar when told to do so, but no longer under their own elected leaders. In 1734 the "Turkish" Kazaki were wanted, and invited back, to be Russian subjects. Once again a Setch appeared, but under appointed Hetmans. Under Elizabeth the Kazachestvo again seemed to gain ground, as the Hetman was a personal favourite of the Tsaritza. After this each new reign brought more limitations with it. Catherine finally reorganized the remnants of the great institution. The Crimea having just been conquered, the Kazaki were no more needed as outposts in the south, and Potemkin was sent to wipe away the Setch; those who resisted were sent to monasteries; the Hetman was appointed Governor-

General of Little Russia, and the already existing distinctions between the rich and the poor were encouraged in many ways. The lands of the Kazaki, together with their working population, were given as imperial presents to prominent court-officials. The new Kazak nobility received land and serfs. Serfdom appeared in the very districts where formerly famous leaders shared with the youngest Kazaki their booty, their simple meals, and simpler joys—their very lives, for the sake of Unity, Creed, and Freedom.

What is now left of the Kazachestvo can hardly show what it once was, before it was subdued and mangled past all recognition.

. . . . .

Many *private* people amongst the Little Russians (apart from the extra-loyal organization of the modern Kazachestvo), still call themselves Kazaki; but by this they do not intend to express any sympathy with the brutal servants of the Tsars. On the contrary: "I am a free Kazak!" they say—and it is the echo of the days of yore; it is the old noble tradition that fills their hearts with pride when they apply to themselves the great old name.

But as the years go by, the echo will again become a living voice. The first sound of its awakening has reached us already, and died away—for the present. In 1904 the Urupski regiment of the Kazaki, called from its villages, was stationed in the southern town Ekaterinodar. But the Russo-Japanese War was over—nor had they been sent to fight in the East. This

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was at the time of numerous strikes amongst the workmen; even the soldiers of the Anapski battalion were on strike, and the Kazaki were told to turn their *nagaiki* solely against "the inner foe." After several of their usual brutal attacks on the people's meetings, it dawned upon the Kazaki of the Urupski regiment that they were not there in Russia to go against her own people; and they declared that "they would no longer consent to shed the blood of their innocent brethren at the command of their chiefs; it was not this that was their work in Russia."

The frightened chiefs let the men disperse. When the well-known lissom figure of a mounted Kazak appeared in the square of the nearest town in the course of a meeting, the people stared at him with the usual hatred and distrust. But when the delegate said that he came to tell the people the Kazak's mind—and was allowed to declare it from the tribune—thousands of caps flew in the air with a thundering hurrah! No Kazak of the last two hundred years had had such a reception.

But the regiment was overpowered, and fifty men were arrested. Several agitators were sentenced to hard labour up to terms of twenty years.

Notwithstanding their conviction that "the Tsar does not know what is being done in his name," the Tsar did not commute the sentence, although the jury made a plea for clemency.

What actually withholds the rank and file of the present Kazáchestvo from awakening to the con-

sciousness of the atrocious rôle they play in the life of the country is their artificially bred aristocracy, which is narrowly exclusive, lazy, money-loving, and proud of being heartless. But the genuine old spirit of the free Kazachestvo may very likely revive some day in the gloom of the Siberian dungeons.

III

SOME NOTES ON RUSSIAN PIETY AND ON THE LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN CLERGY

The Russian Church has lost its flock.—
PROFESSOR MILIUKOV

ONE often finds statements in the English press about the "true piety" of the Russian. As a proof one is told, for instance, that the word *peasant* in Russian means a *Christian*. It does not. The Russian for "Christian" is *hristianìn*, while the "peasant" is *krestiànin*. Young children mix up the spelling of these two words, and teachers in lower forms constantly have to explain that "krestiànin" *does not mean* "Christian." It approaches the meaning in this way: The root of the word—*krest*—means a *cross;* with the picturesqueness of our language, it conveys the idea of the hardships of a Russian peasant's life—which are plentiful enough, Heaven knows, but scarcely a proof that Christianity is flourishing in Russia.

The religion of a Russian peasant is akin to fetishism. The miracle-working ikons, for instance, are strictly classified: the Holy Virgin of one place is "good for having children"—and childless people come from hundreds of miles to kneel before her nights long to "pray out" a child; while the Holy Virgin of another place is "good to keep childbirth away."

Similarly, one St. Nicholas is the image to pray to for rain, and another St. Nicholas is known for producing sunshine; and so on. Strangely enough, people know that both images are meant to represent the same saint; yet the two different pieces of canvas are supposed to produce opposite effects.

The ordinary ikons can be seen in all houses except those of "unbelievers," and people—even belonging to society—are in the habit of crossing themselves and bowing to the ikons both before and after meals. It is a mere act of magic ritual. One often sees a man from the upper commercial class (supposed to be very pious) crossing his chest with a dozen quick gestures of the bejewelled hand, keeping his cigar between his fingers all the time. Merchants as well as workmen often cross themselves before "overturning" (*oprokinut*) a glass of vodka into their mouths. Many pious people cross their mouths whenever they yawn. This is to prevent the Evil Spirit from entering the soul through the aperture. These actions are typical of Russian "piety."

Thousands of babies have perished simply because, if the child gets a fit of any kind, the women of the poorer classes have a habit of throwing a thick shawl over it and making the sign of the cross, which they often continue to do until the child is suffocated. As another instance of a similar kind I recall a rich lady who when her nearly ten-year-old grandson, whom she has spoilt, flings himself on the floor kicking and screaming in a fit of temper, piously bends over him and

crosses him again and again, repeating the words: "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! . . . In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!"

Only the other day I received a letter from Russia which began with a common short prayer and went on thus: "You must copy this prayer and this letter nine times and send them to nine friends of yours. If you do, you will have a joy in the course of the next seven days. If you don't, a disaster will happen to you."

Every Russian is meant to wear all his life the little cross that is put round his neck at the sacrament of baptism. Only the "unbelievers" dare to take it off. But those who believe in its power most—peasants, soldiers, sailors—very often wear on the same chain or silk cord a *ladonka:* this is a piece of cloth with something sewn into it—a bit of incense (*ladon*) against the powers of darkness, or a fish-tooth for luck, or a certain kind of grass to attract a lover, or another kind to make the beloved hate a rival.

The priests never argue against all this: it does not occur to them to do so. Of course, exceptions are found, but I speak of what is typical. Usually, the clergyman would not be listened to even if he did interfere; he would be deliberately told to "stick to his cassock" (*Znaï, batiushka, svoï podriasnik*).

Certainly there is religious feeling in the hearts of millions of Russians, but it is not due to any influence on the part of the degenerate clergy. The form of religion with which the Church has to do is a blend of

fetishism, ignorance, and superstition, mingled with traces of æsthetic sensibility. Educated society has drifted away from the ignorant clergy, who now in consequence begin to demand reform. But nothing will reform them until fresh currents of intellectual life flow freely in their midst.

A glance at the history of the Russian clergy will help us to understand the conditions now existing.

In the ninth century some Byzantine priests came to Kiev, "the mother of Russian towns," and, according to the wish of the buoyant Prince Vladimir, baptized the unsophisticated people all over his country. They knew next to nothing about Christianity, and in some places literally fought against the party of priests and the prince's soldiers who assisted in the mission. "Throwing off their boots, they ran out of their town gates to meet the intruders, and fought with them for two days and two nights vigorously," says the history of the ancient trade-republic Novgorod.

This party of the Byzantine clergy, having won their position, gave a tone of superiority to their class in Russia at the very start, especially as they were really educated people, while the Russian folk were absolutely ignorant. The grandson of Vladimir gave the clergy all judicial rights, and the ecclesiastical class in *his* time seems to have been fairly intelligent.

But later on, by a natural course of things, the clergy became purely Russian. All that was left of the Byzantine influence were the outside picturesque character of all Greek Church rites, the fascination

they exercise over the poetical and emotional Russian nature, and the stamp of official significance which the monastic clergy had acquired. Neither the Russian hermits and monks nor the parish clergy had any moral or intellectual education, but the co-operation of Church and monarchy helped Moscow to attain absolute autocracy. The great princes, later Tsars, would bend their heads only to receive the benediction of the "Patriarchs of all Russia."

Many causes account for the dominant position of the monastic clergy—the so-called *Black Clergy*. They had all possible support from the princes, they owned monasteries and lands which flourished thanks to the gifts of the pious rich, and were free from taxation. Besides, every bishop received parish dues, victuals, and labour from the *White Clergy* (secular clergy) of his diocese. The monks received instruction in Scripture and in old Slavonic, which remains the language of the Church. The prominent monks took a notable part in the affairs of the principalities, and the Black Clergy thus grew into a superior caste.

The White Clergy was a caste too—through the custom that the son should inherit the profession, the post, and the parish of his father. But their condition was miserable. The caste had to provide for itself. The secular priesthood never had any regular pay, nor even casual support, from the government, and had to make its living from the voluntary donations of the parishes, while the parish churches mostly owned no land, and had to pay money and labour for the use of

their grounds to the landowners. What is more, the White Clergy were treated by the government on equal terms with the peasantry: each priest and curate had to pay the humiliating *podushnaya podat,* which means so much "for each living soul." They were relieved from the latter tax only by Peter the Great (1711). No scheme for regular payment in any form was introduced till 1886, and it is only lately that a partial reform in this direction has been carried out. Even now only the "military," "naval," and "foreign" Russian clergy get a regular stipend, because they are in the State service. The parish churches occasionally own some lands, and the parish priests get a casual support from the government for keeping their understaff. But chiefly it still depends on the *treby*—the rites performed on private demands of the parish. The only definite thing is "the pension for thirty-five years of irreproachable service," which amounts to £13 a year. The widows of the secular vicars receive £9 a year; the widows of the curates £6.

What can a Russian workman or peasant afford to pay his village priest for his services? What can he spare for building and keeping his village church? Such clerical services as he needs privately, the *treby,* he pays for literally with coppers, whether they be baptisms, funerals, marriages, reading the "passing-away prayers" over the dying, or "singing off the expired," reading the Bible aloud through the three nights while the dead are left in the house, or giving benediction to a new hut or to a scanty Easter meal.

In towns, where the parishioners largely consist of the mercantile class, the White Clergy are safe; but in small villages they were—and are—actually harassed by want as much as the peasants themselves.

The state of constant need makes them fellow sufferers, and causes the Russian peasant to look upon his instructor and spiritual leader with good-natured compassion, very often with humour. Few things can be more pathetic than the slight, dingy-looking figure of a hungry *batiushka* in his long, shabby robes, with his long hair made into a thin plait, treated by an equally hungry peasant with a philosophical good-humour. . . . "You stick to your psalm-book, batiushka, and don't you interfere with my business. Come along and have a drink." And the dishevelled, thin figure is often seen at night time—rather embarrassed by the length of his robes—carefully led to his home by the stronger arms of his sturdy though melancholy companion.

On his round of Easter benediction, the village priest has refreshment in each hut he visits, and carries home to his wife, the "old popadia," any little bits of eatables he has not managed to put down himself, wrapped up in scraps of paper. This is always done, and the peasants smile with satisfaction, and also with apprehension, when the poor man gradually becomes "jolly" and has to be helped or carried home, together with his bag of humble but well-meant offerings.

It would be unfair to expect from these "spiritual leaders" a higher level of life than that of the rest of the country-folk. Each of them is struggling to get

some sort of a parish; for centuries they were all of them left as ignorant as their flocks. Right up to the eighteenth century there were no organized schools for theological or any other teaching; the majority of the White Clergy could not read or write, and took the service by heart; those who could read had learned privately, thanks to some lucky chance, and only occasionally handed the knowledge on in their turn. How they managed the task of teaching can be seen from the fact that, less than a century ago, it usually took two years for a boy to learn his alphabet from his private tutor, some curate or psalm-singer.

Up to Peter the Great's time, the only educational centres for the clergy were the small schools at the monasteries, called academies, and the secular schools at the "bishops' hostels and yards." These places were simply large inns belonging to the bishops, with churches attached to them. The bishops used to stay there on their rounds and take the services. Dozens, often hundreds, of people—every one who liked—stayed there waiting for months to see and to hear the bishop, spending their money meanwhile on board and lodging, donations to the Church, and gifts to the numerous staff of the Black Clergy, monks and novices. There were curious little schools for boys in these "yards," which were supposed to give ample education to the future priests.

Some of these places still exist, although they have lost their educational purpose. For instance, the "yard" of the well-known Father John of Cronstadt

A CHURCH PROCESSION

From the painting by V. Peroff

used to be, in the last decades of the last century, crowded with women suffering from religious hysteria. They came from the hungry peasantry as well as from the over-fed tradesmen class. They did not ask for any teaching, but they were pining to see Father John's "miracles," and waited there for their chance to touch his robes and to be one of the suffocating crowd through which he squeezed his path of benediction. To have him for a few minutes in one's own room in this inn cost a large sum of extra money; only gorgeously dressed women could afford it, while the poor, dirty peasantry breathlessly crowded outside the doors and on the staircases.

It should be noted in passing that every monastery in Russia owns a monastic hotel attached to it, which is a source of considerable income; and nowhere else in the world is there such a conspicuous difference between the attention shown to the "clean public" and the rude attitude towards the "black people," as the working classes are ordinarily termed in the official jargon. Bright, clean private rooms and excellent meals are offered to the first category of pilgrims, while the latter class have to crowd stifling into filthy, unventilated barns. A well-known Russian publicist, A. Koni, has embodied this extreme in an aphorism: "Russia's motto is: *Ladies and gentlemen—forward! People—back!*"

Cases of personal influence (good or bad) are rare in the history of the Russian priesthood. It needs some exceptional personal power to make the simple and yet

independent Russian mind want a religious leader or instructor in his private beliefs and difficulties. This power of attraction is rare, and hence that striking absence of any moral bond between the clergy and the rest of the population—an absence which was hotly discussed by the two great statesmen, Count Vitte and Pobiedonostzeff, in 1905, and is now openly brought forward as an indication that "the Russian Church needs reform."

Besides, the lack of influence is certainly due to the lack of education amongst the mass of the priesthood. The general intellectual and spiritual standard of the White Clergy in the past can be illustrated by the fact that till the eighteenth century groups of officially ordained priests used to stand in the crescents and in the squares of the towns "looking for jobs." There were not enough churches in the land to provide posts for all of them, yet they did not like to leave their caste, as this meant either soldiering or serfdom. They would even take monastic orders to avoid taxation and starvation combined. It is hardly necessary to add that this did not raise the standard of enlightenment in the monasteries. The unemployed White Clergy were so numerous that they were officially designated as the "Crescent Clergy," and wandered about freely—ready to perform marriage, to bury anyone for a pittance, or to make monks of all who wished.

Besides the hereditary acquisition of ecclesiastical posts, there existed a system of elections by village parishes; but towards the end of the eighteenth century

this was announced by the government to be too "worldly" and was prohibited. True, the election system did work in a "worldly" way: the candidates who asked the lowest fees for the *treby* got the parishes.

Once a parish was obtained, it was usually *fixed* for one of the priest's sons beforehand; this was done officially by the bishop of the district. The other sons had to look out for parishes for themselves. When there were no sons in the family, it was the usual thing to have the post *fixed* in favour of the priest's daughter: this meant that the parish was to come into the hands of any man from the ecclesiastical caste who would marry the girl. This state of things lasted till the intellectual upheaval of the sixties, and was abolished only in 1869. On the other hand, a young man of clerical education (whatever that might mean) had no chance to get a post as a curate or vicar if he was married to a "worldly girl"—not a priest's daughter; but marry he must, because a bachelor could not and cannot become a priest in the Greek Church.

Needless to say, no trace of holiness was to be found in such marriages. One of the Russian writers of the last century, Pomialovsky, published in the sixties a series of reminiscences. Himself the son of a curate in the suburbs of Petersburg, he was sent to one of the elementary ecclesiastical boarding-schools, called Bursa, near the capital. Most of its pupils became, on leaving, curates, under-curates, or psalm-readers, who form the lowest rank of the ecclesiastical hierarchy;

the less fortunate Bursarians became shepherds, scribes, or vagabonds.

Like many other schools of this class, the Bursa existed on the voluntary contributions of the district—but its nine hundred pupils were indeed the nightmare of the local donors! The details of the appalling squalor and filth, and the cruel, stupid, ugly, fiendish relations between the ignorant masters and their pupils, were such that it would be utterly impossible to offer them to an English reader. Dickens's picture of the old workhouses is a mere nothing in comparison. No imagination could depict the horrors of such a place. It must suffice to say that most of the boys remained there as long as fourteen years, and emerged from this hell when they were nearly thirty. In this period of time they were flogged four hundred times on the average. All human and humane aspirations were crushed out of them; and the knowledge knocked into them, at best, amounted to bad reading, a little spelling, some Scripture, odds and ends of rhetoric, geography, and arithmetic, and Slavonic for use in the church-services: all this was learned in one way only—by heart.

It was due to the exceptionally lucky chance of a friendship with the Samson of the school that Pomialovsky was able to keep his brain clear. Although he was himself turned by the horrors of the surroundings into a "sung-off-one" (hopeless, dead), his intellect helped him to observe things, and even to retain the capacity of feeling—which was almost a miracle. The

result was a minute description of these fourteen years of schooling, or, rather, of moral and physical degradation. Pomialovsky's account created a sensation, and the general movement of those years of socia reforms finally made the existence of the Bursa itself impossible. Yet it is not a hundred years since the time when incidents such as the following were common.

Some old and shabby woman would appear in the gloomy buildings of the Bursa and, first of all, throw herself down on her knees before the inspector (headmaster), presenting him with dried mushrooms, or eggs, or a sucking-pig, or plum-paste. With tears of humiliation she would ask him to " be a father " and to send some bridegrooms to see her orphan daughter, who had a parish fixed for her future husband, but nothing to eat until she was married.

The moment she was gone, a joyful cry would arise like a mighty wave and thunder through the fœtid atmosphere of the immense building—a place of miasma and insects: " Bridegrooms ! Bridegrooms wanted ! Who is ready to marry ? The inspector wants to see the bridegrooms at once ! "

Queer creatures would answer to that call. They would emerge from the back benches—the " Kamchatka " named after the remotest corner of Siberia to which criminals are sent. On those benches they slept in their everlasting sheepskin coats, dressing-gowns, and old under-robes inherited from their fathers, the village curates; there they drank and tortured each other

for amusement, year in and year out; and thence they were summoned "to the threshold" every day, to be flogged by their comrades or by the watchmen, by order of the infuriated instructors.

But now a dramatic situation had arisen; the whole place was throbbing with excitement and joy. Those who came forward were the eldest, and therefore the possible candidates. It was their day now! They were the most important figures in the school, envied by all the rest. Several of them went to interview the inspector, while nine hundred of their comrades remained eagerly waiting for the decision: which of the candidates would be permitted to go and see the proffered bride on the next day? Back they came to the evil-smelling class-rooms (there were no other apartments to live in)—some of them only to be flogged for their impudence, others with the inspector's blessing, just according to his whim of the moment.

On the following day the heroes were rigged out by their comrades' zeal and generosity. Off they would go, with five hours' leave for the interview. Pomialovsky says that some of them would find the destined bride "too much of an old hag," and the resources from the parish too thin, and—brutes as they were—contemptuously decline. Others actually thought more of the fun of a little outing than of matrimonial considerations, and were content with the interview, the tea-party, and with "borrowing" some silk handkerchiefs which were on show, or pipes, or coppers. But the least exacting would marry on such occasion;

just to break the monotony of the abominable existence at school. Once married, they would receive the parish and the post of vicar or curate as the girl's *dot*. Such marriages took place constantly, and were treated as a matter of course.

Let us pass from the middle of last century back to the beginning of the eighteenth, when Peter the Great first took the question of both the White and Black Clergy in hand.

With the upright and public-spirited nature of an autocratic reformer, he did not hesitate to apply his own measures. He ordered numerous elementary schools to be established at the monasteries, besides those depending on voluntary contributions, like Bursa. He founded secondary ecclesiastical schools, improved the "academies," and introduced a regular, though narrowly scholastic, programme of theological education. The village priests henceforth were to be examined by the bishops personally, before being appointed. However, he recognized the hereditary character of the profession, which made the secular clergy a regular caste more definitely than ever. Peter freed the clergy from the burden of the soul-tax, but he made up the loss in other ways; thus the White Clergy had to provide villages and country towns with night-watchmen, the barracks with workmen, the prisons with instructors, and the cities with fire-brigades. All these odd duties continued to exist for a number of years after Peter's reign. His creative imagination breathed life into everything he approached—more

often than not a most unexpected sort of life. He was most concerned with the Black Clergy: the monks' treasuries and lands, their habit of interfering with the Tsar's power, their luxurious manners of life in their seclusion, and their lack of any spiritual influence over the masses.

It may be added here, referring to the last point, that Peter himself was typically Russian in this respect, and did not differ from any peasant. It usually happens that the Russian is fond of the atmosphere of church, of its imposing beauty, of the really beautiful choral singing (without organ accompaniment), even of the Byzantine gorgeousness of the service; but, as we have seen, he dislikes any form of private preaching and personal instruction, any moral didacticism or interference with what religion he has in his heart. Except for the subconscious influence of elevating surroundings, he looks after his soul for himself, and the church forms only a poetical framework to his own thoughts. A Russian peasant prays his own prayers, which he never read or learned, without books or music of any description in his hands. Every one stands for hours in the Russian churches—there are no seats in them; and one can easily see how individual are the prayers of the people as they kneel and cross themselves and touch the floor with their foreheads, in all sincerity and simplicity of mind, whenever their spontaneous prayer prompts them to do so. No one takes any prayer-books to church; hardly anyone possesses such things, and psalm-books do not exist.

A number of little slips of paper are usually handed to the curate at the end of the mass by demure shrivelled old women; they cross themselves and bow reverently as they give them to him with the addition of a few coppers. Some of these well-fingered papers are lists of names of relatives, friends, and perhaps protectors, who are dead; the Lord needs reminding about their souls waiting for the Resurrection; these bits of paper bear the heading *For eternal peace.* The names on the other lists are those of living people, dear to the hearts of the simple women, who are to be mentioned to God under the heading *For health.* Every one of the loving old creatures pays two or three kopecks to some "learned" soldier or workman who writes the names down for her.

After the mass these women remain in the church, standing near the *ikonostas* and piously and eagerly listen to the curate. Waving a censer with one hand, he holds the papers in the other and, after a short prayer "for eternal peace" and another "for health," calls out in a loud voice one string of names after another, reading them from the given columns. And great is the awed horror that comes into some shrivelled little face when the dear old woman hears her living relatives being commended to the Lord as dead, and the dead ones as living!

When the business is over and she gently, but with much pain, reproaches the man for his mistake, the usual answer is: "Never mind, old one, they will make it all out up there!"—and her only consolation is the hope that "they" will.

This characteristic of Russian piety explains the quaint way in which the clergy are treated: their performance of the ritual and all the ostensible part of their work is in demand, but the interference with private life and private beliefs is not wanted. In the ancient times, the women, children, and servants in well-to-do houses would find it a pastime in their seclusion to entertain the wandering monks of any degree, and gossip piously with them over some refreshment. But a Russian priest of the last half-century, especially in the towns, takes care *not* to "go round and see how the people in his parish are getting on." *

When a vicar is quite sure that the members of some family are not unbelievers, he will call with his curate and under-curate just to give his benediction to a new home, or to a young mother with her baby, or to an Easter meal after the seven weeks of Lent. But he will be tactful enough not to go beyond his formal duties: he will slip on his golden brocade robes the moment he enters the hall, smooth his long hair, cover it with a tall purple-velvet hat, at once proceed to the corner of the sitting-room where the ikons are hanging on the wall, and start the special service without delay. His curate, in similar garments but without the velvet hat, his often glorious mass of long hair falling in a fine profusion over his shoulders, will

* Since the revolution, exceptionally able and attractive men can sometimes be met with amongst the village-priests; but these are altruistic social workers, who are loved as such by the people, and share the usual risks with every one like them. All the same, they have nothing to do with the people's beliefs and morals.

A THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT A PUBLIC-HOUSE

From the painting by N. Orloff

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assist the vicar with his enormous bass voice—the ambition and the pride of all good curates centres round a fine bass voice—and will fill the room with the blue smoke of the incense from his silver censer. The under-curate (psalm-singer) will light the incense and the wax candles which he gives to all those present (oh, the oppressive awe which childhood feels for all of this!), and then will do his part in a high tenor. Whatever the hour of the day, all three of them will be offered refreshments after this service, and will have the money gently slipped into their palms at the parting handshake. But no vicar will ever think of giving moral advice or seeking to influence his erring flock, even if he "knows all about them," outside his official church sermon. The clergy are as far from this as from the Western way of organizing village clubs or lectures, or funds for the poor. Their work is—ritual. Their flock is the source of their own living. The Russian mind is not inclined to listen to religious homilies, and it needs an exceptional personality to attain any influence over it.

In 1869 the bonds of the White Clergy as a caste were broken, and the inheriting of ecclesiastical posts was abolished; these are now given to anyone who has the special clerical education (which never includes a university course); the sons of the modern clergy enter any profession, their marriages to "worldly girls" are not exceptional, and the objectionable Bursa-matches are a thing of the past.

But there still remains a pathetic stamp of narrowness

about the majority of the White Clergy—whether they struggle with hopeless poverty in the villages or grow sleek and prosperous in the big towns. Those parish priests who go beyond the sphere prescribed to them are promptly unfrocked: as the brilliant religious philosopher Father Gregory Petrov, of St. Petersburg, whose sermons attracted all educated society in the nineties, found to his cost.

Here is a conversation between two village tradesmen heard in a train and re-told by A. S. Prugavin.*

" . . . Just recently this kind of incident happened in a neighbouring village: a peasant came to the *pop* † and asked him to marry him to a girl. 'Ten roubles!' demanded the pop. The poor little peasant could not think of such an expense and offered three; the poor fellow had literally nothing more to spare for his wedding. So they bargained for a whole week. At last the pop consented. 'All right,' said he. 'I'll do it for three roubles.' So the couple came and the wedding began. When it came to the point of walking round the *naloy* the pop led them round once only, then stopped.‡ So the bridegroom said: 'I thought, batiushka, that

* *See* next chapter.

† " Pop " does not mean the Pope of Rome: the latter is called *Pàpa* in Russian, whilst the word pop is the usual, everyday somewhat slang term for any kind of Russian priests. Only those who mean to lay some stress on their reverence for the priesthood call them *sviashchenniki* (holy men).

‡ The sacrament of marriage is performed in the centre of the church, in front of a low table called naloy—covered with brocades—on which the Bible, the cross, the candles, the crowns and the wine are placed. In due course the couple are led by the priest three

it was three times one is led round the naloy, not once ?' —'Oh, you want three times the value of your three roubles, do you ?' came the unexpected reply of the pop, and he continued the service. Then the bridegroom observed that the crowns were left alone on the naloy and that the priest omitted putting them on his and his bride's heads. 'How is it, batiushka, that you are wedding us without crowns ?" the poor peasant asked, perplexed.

"'What? Crowns at a three-rouble wedding? Oh, that's too much to expect!'

"At the end of the ceremony yet another detail was omitted: the pop did not give the married couple any of the blessed wine to drink. 'Batiushka . . .' the disconsolate fellow mumbled, 'won't you let us have some wine?' 'Wine—for three roubles? You'll go without,' the pop snapped back. And so the wedding ended.

"'I say! Was that the end of the whole affair?' the other man asked.

"'It would have been, if it had not been for the lady, our landowner. She heard all about it and reported to the authorities. Now there is an inquiry going on.'

"'O well,' said the other: 'our pop is not as bad as all that. He is not particular about his personal dignity. But'—and the man closed his eyes, and shook his head.

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times round the naloy, without which proceeding the sacrament is not valid.

The Russian for "wedding" is *crowning*, hence the significance of the next item in the story.

"'He drinks? Is that what you mean?'

"'With the best of them! He drinks as I never saw anyone drink before. And he always does something most unexpected when in that condition. . . . The other night every one in the village was in bed and asleep when—boo-oom! came the sound of the big church bell.* We all rushed out from our huts, horribly frightened. . . . But there was no fire to be seen anywhere. We couldn't make it out. So we ran to the bell-tower and up the stairs to see who was ringing and for what reason. Well, whom do you think we found there but our pop! There he was, in his night-shirt and trousers, ringing away with all his might.'

"'Batiushka! What on earth has happened?' we asked.

"'I have quarrelled with my wife,' said he.

"Every one in the carriage laughed heartily," says Prugavin, finishing his sketch. It may be noted that he drew it from nature in 1906.

Of course, there exist amongst the village clergy men with minds pure and beautiful, however simple. They honestly believe in their calling and try to bring great truths home to their flocks, not by abstract generalizations, but by drawing their attention to

* Owing to the absence of fire stations and fire brigades in the villages, the fire alarm is given by a loud, sonorous ringing of the biggest church bell. Whoever sees the fire first, runs to the church tower and rings. This kind of tocsin is called *nabat*, and is similarly used in all cases of grave importance when all the villagers are wanted.

particular instances in everyday village life. However, this is not approved. Here is a quotation from an Archbishop's letter of rebuke to a simple-minded, truly religious vicar: "Hereafter mind that your sermons contain no references to real life, especially where it might prove unpleasant to the officials."

We had a great writer in the second half of the last century—Lesskov—who was thoroughly acquainted with the ways of the village and town clergy. He depicted them in a number of stories, which are instinct with real life, but would seem to an English reader like pictures of some imaginary land. For the truthfulness of his vivid accounts Lesskov was persecuted and lost his post in the Civil Service. His critics should remember that besides his relentless exposure of what was bad it was he who found and brought to light some other types amongst the Russian village clergy which to us are touching in their purity and natural noble simplicity. I will venture to quote an incident from the private memoirs of one such priest. But I should mention beforehand—to give the requisite local colour—that the Russian clergy speak a very distinct and special dialect: * a mixture of Russian and old Slavonic, which produces the greatest imaginable effect

* The Bible was first introduced into Russia in the tenth century by the learned Greeks Cyril and Methodius. They devised an alphabet for the Slavonic language, which was the one old Russians spoke. It has remained the language of the Church until now. But the Slavonic characters were used by Peter the Great for the foundation of a pure Russian alphabet, which, although greatly modified, still bears a resemblance to its prototype, the Greek.

by its combination of figurative expressions with the utmost candour and simplicity—an effect which will be certainly lost in the English translation. I also feel tempted to say beforehand that "Father Saveli" was very big and handsome, of a patriarchal kind of beauty, dignified and perfectly unaffected. His dearly loved wife was a gentle creature, full of admiring devotion to her husband, full of tenderness and humane feeling. They had no children, which was the only cloud on their union.

One Sunday Father Saveli spoke in his sermon of an incident which had lately occurred in the village, and by which he had been much affected: an extremely poor, unmarried man, who was supposed to be imbecile, had adopted a new-born child he had found in a bare strip of land next to his tumble-down hut. The tenderness of this man, unobserved by others, touched the heart of the good priest, and he made this case and its beauty the subject of his sermon. Here are some of the lines Father Saveli wrote in his diary at the close of the day:

"I don't know what there could be clever and eloquent in my words, but the people seemed to have been affected by what I said, for I felt tears dropping on my hand as I was giving the benediction to many of them who approached me after the service. But that was not all. As if in reward for my sincere exhortation to care for even those children who are strangers to us, the Lord showed me to-day the great value of the treasure I was given by Him. As I

approached my home after the service I was met by some one I thought I had always known thoroughly: my wife, Natalia Nikolaevna, it appears, came stealthily home first and prepared for me my usual midday tea, and then stood, at the threshold of our hut, waiting for me not with empty hands, but with a bunch of water-lilies and stocks. 'Aren't you a cunning woman, Natalia Nikolaevna!' said I.

"She was not offended at my joke; but, nestling against me, wept silently and bitterly. I knew her secret sorrow, my dear wife, whose everlasting longing had been to console her husband by bearing to him a Benjamin, while unable to do so, for reasons which are not given to us to discuss. Yes, she did all she could think of in meeting me after my sermon with white water-lilies, but besides the water-lilies I saw her pure white heart as open to love as their petals were.

"Sadly and silently we sat down to our tea, but our meal became a service of mutual compassion, and down we went on our knees praying together before the image of our Saviour. . . .

"'Tell me, Father Saveli, tell me, my beloved friend: did you ever sin against the commandment of chastity before you met me?'

"I must confess that this question confused me, for I gathered that my little wife had got something into her head which wasn't quite a suitable subject for her to be interested in. But armed with the exquisite charm of her modesty and at the same time with that feminine coquetry, which she—albeit of a priest's family—

has inherited from nature, she began to draw before my mental vision the possible temptations of my youth. All young ladies, if you please, not only from amongst our clerical set, but the worldly ones as well, must have been sighing for me! Much amused as I was at first by this fancy of hers, I tried seriously to allay her doubts; it was not difficult for me to insist on my former innocence, having no lies to tell on the subject. But the more persuasive I was the more sadness I saw reflected in her eyes, which puzzled me deeply. At last she said:

"'But try to remember, Father Saveli . . . Try hard to think of it: isn't there, maybe, anywhere in the wide world a small orphan child who does not know his father?'

"Then I realized what was in her heart: she wanted to find a possible illegitimate child of mine—and adopt it! . . . But I had never had one.

"I rushed to the window like one mad and lifted my eyes in order that the heavens alone should see me, ashamed of myself before that womanly kindness. But she, my white water-lily, the sinless and lovable one, she followed me with her light steps, lifted her tiny paws, placed them on my shoulders and said:

"'Do try to remember, my pigeon sweet: perhaps he is to be found somewhere, that dear little creature. Let us go and fetch him!' . . .

"She not only longed to find him, she already loved him in her heart, he was living in it. . . .

"This was too much for me. Biting my bearded

lips I fell on my knees before her and bowed before her, touching the ground with my head, and sobbed those sobs that come when words will not.

"And really, where except in Russia are women born like her? Who taught her that goodness? You were her only teacher, great God, and you gave her to me, your undeserving servant, for me to see your mercy still more clearly."

But Father Saveli's sermon, which indirectly brought him those moments of exquisite joy, was not appreciated by the Consistoria: his appreciation of a poor beggar offended some local authorities, and the good priest was sent for, locked up and kept for thirty-six days on bread and water.

Amongst the episodes and types of Russian life depicted by Lesskov there are many which would serve as characteristic illustrations for this chapter. But I must limit myself to just one more.

There was a rich lady landowner in the last century who lived under six successive Tsars, and had danced with two of them. After the éclat of her youth she shut herself up on her beautiful estate, and no one dared to approach her without her invitation, which, when given, was equivalent to a command. She grew very old, but remained very clever, independent and domineering, very sharp and effective in her own style. After her sixtieth birthday she reduced her rare outings —upon which she had as a rule merely driven round the country in state without stopping anywhere—to one in the course of the whole year: this was to attend

the sacred ceremony of "Blessing the waters" on January 6.

For that purpose a large cross is cut out in the thick ice of a river or lake in every town and village in Russia, and the ceremony is of such importance that it is even called "the Christening Parade." All the officials of the place and all the troops are present; hundreds or thousands of inhabitants stand on the ice throughout the long service with their heads uncovered in the twenty or so degrees of frost, and the metal ornaments on the uniforms sparkle in the sun or grow dim under the softly falling snow, as the case may be. There are always a good many colds and even deaths after that day.

To return to the lady just mentioned. As soon as the blessing had rendered the water within the large cross holy, and ordinary mortals began scooping it out reverently with cups and jars purposely provided, the old *grande dame* would deliberately plunge into the water of the cross, furs and all! Then after struggling out still as dignified as ever, she would go through the final kneeling and crossing, and in a deliberate and leisurely manner take her seat in the beautiful carriage —two devoted dwarfs, her serfs, sitting at her side— and drive away without creating any confusion in the pompous ceremony! This she was known to repeat for a number of years in succession.

Russians are afraid of draughts, almost hermetically seal their windows for the winter, and do not take any cold baths—except in summer. But the "scorn of

obstacles and difficulties . . . a dash, a go, an extra flip of energy" observed by Mr. Maurice Baring, was certainly there in the case of this old lady. The strength of her religious feeling was somewhat unusual, but it is so in many cases of Russian piety. It will not alter until the whole nature of the so-called "Russian religious spirit" finds new forms and replaces the alliance of officialdom and fetishism which makes up the Russian Church of the present day.

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IV

UNORTHODOXY AND THE MONASTIC PRISONS

> The Orthodox Church has always been the stronghold of the knout and a servile admirer of despotism.
>
> BIELINSKY

THE effectiveness of the Russian Revolution should not be minimized by the critics of the West, nor by our temporarily triumphant reactionaries, nor even by the bitterly disappointed revolutionaries themselves. For one thing, it has made a vast difference in the possibilities of the Press; a great number of true things are said and written, and remain overlooked by the authorities—for whom it must be more comfortable not to attract too much attention to certain cases by challenging the truth. The question of how much has been gained by the institution of the Russian Duma is too complex to be condensed into a few words, nor does it form the subject of this particular study. But there is another point for the Revolution: it has thrown light on the state of things in the Church Department (Zerkovnoie Viedomstvo), albeit without directly aiming at its reform. There lie before me several books by our great authority and specialist on the question—the ethnologist, geographer and publicist, A. S. Prugavin—

who was certainly not appointed by the Government to carry out his investigations!

One of his books begins with the following words:

"Pobiedonostzeff, 'the gendarme in Christ,' has finally achieved the transformation of the Russian Church into a Police Department."

This book is now printed in Russia and sold by the thousand; and no attempt has been made to disprove the telling details of fact with which Prugavin's works are teeming. The time has come when to ignore the publication of cold truth may be safer than arguing.

For nearly a quarter of a century Pobiedonostzeff had been the Procurator of the Holy Synod. This institution, when founded by Peter the Great in the place of the Patriarchate, was intended to control the Church, and ever since has been under the command of a layman, its Procurator. The Holy Synod was to be at the head of a network of offices, Eparchias and Consistorias.* With all their golden brocade robes, or tall black-veiled headgear, the priests were to spy on each other and those under them particularly. Peter introduced this system for the purpose of keeping his own "eagle eye" on this particular sphere of life in the land. The eagle eye is closed for ever, but the Holy Synod has remained, a dry formal institution, where, to use a Russian saying, *a chinovnik rides a chinovnik and*

* Eparchias are large administrative districts under the bishops. The Consistorias are their offices, composed of clergy as well as lay officials. (The latter now are fairly well known under the humorous nickname of "consistoria rats.")

his knout is a chinovnik. Chinovnik simply means a man of rank in the Civil Service, but the spiritual deadness of the latter is such an established fact that the word is invariably used by liberal people with disdain, by the peasants with disgust and fear combined, and by the educated men amongst the *chinovniki* themselves with a touch of humour—when they wish to excuse themselves.

Speaking seriously and frankly, there is no Church in Russia—that is to say, there is *no body of people who represent and lead the spiritual life of the nation:* the Holy Synod is far from being holy, as the reader will presently see. That the clergy have no elevating influence whatever is clear to the reader already, I hope. The religion of the bulk of the lower classes is, practically speaking, a fetishism—positivistic and anthropomorphic. A great number of the peasantry are seekers after truth and exact followers of Christ's Commandments; but they can only be so by breaking away from the Church, and they are called and treated as rebels. Those among the educated classes who are not free-thinkers, or, in any case, do not trouble about the Church, are mystics; the "religious and patriotic" aristocracy are mystics frequently, and are further characterized by a strong taste for morbid crazes, as will be seen below.

Meanwhile, the religion of the man in the street is supposed to be the proof of his patriotism, and is considered only as such; if he is indifferent to the Church he is "politically unreliable"; if he is conspicuously

A DISCUSSION OF CREEDS

From the painting by Joukoff

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orthodox, humiliates himself before the priests and the ikons, calls Russia "The Holy Mother Russia," &c., he is a "True Russian." All the Black Hundreds * call themselves "True Russians," after the manner of the "Union of True Russian People" which was formed as an opposition to the Liberation Movement. This Union is openly patronized by the Tsar, instigates through the police and hooligans the massacres of students and Jews, and makes every liberal-minded person most careful not to apply this epithet to himself even casually. It has more than a strong smell of the Black Hundreds, and is used now exclusively as a stereotyped class-name.

Such is the strange rôle of the Russian Church and Religion.

But the indignation of advanced public opinion with the "religious" system of espionage has gradually become so intense that no spying avails, and voices are raised against it from all sides. The priesthood has in its turn become indignant with this attitude towards itself, and insistently cries out for reform—hoping, of course, to get it in a form which would annihilate "religious disobedience."

The last Duma elections were meant to work in this

* "The Black Hundreds" is a nickname which came into use at the time of the Revolution, when the hooligans formed themselves into gangs to carry out the rough part of the work. The name is not officially recognized, while that of the "Union of True Russian People" is. Thus the term is the one generally used by those who belong to neither party to include both—all specifically reactionary elements, in fact.

direction, but the number of the artificially elected clergy reached almost instantaneously such overwhelming dimensions that the Government itself, realizing the scandalous effect which would be produced, made a halt in time and checked the extravagant zeal of the reactionaries. Then the infuriated clergy began electing extreme radicals out of spite! . . . The scandal was great. Even the "Novoie Vriemia" said that these were *mock elections.*

A great number of the White Clergy, however, live in the depth of the country, amongst the *obezdolennyie*, a sadly sounding complex adjective mostly applied by the simple people themselves and by their friends, meaning "Those who have no place in life"; amongst the humble clergy there are some honest men who involuntarily realize what sort of Christianity is demanded of them, and what is called criminal, erring, noxious, and the rest of it. The truly religious feelings of these few good priests are directly at variance with the circulars issued by the Consistorias at the command of the Holy Synod.

Here are some typical lines from a private diary of a sympathetic, simple *pop* of a small town, whose story has been told by Lesskov:

"Jews were sent purposely to knock down the cross from the roof of the little chapel of our sectarians when it had been ordered to be burnt down. This should not be so, I think . . . By midnight I heard that our congregation had assembled on the ruins, and I went there. The people, indeed, prayed quietly, and

their eldest was holding a light in his hands, and it would not go out in the wind. But the mayor ordered his men to approach stealthily; they dragged with them a hose from the fire-engine and squirted water over the praying people. So they went to their homes carrying tapers that would not go out in the wind, and singing to the glory of God. . . . Christianity has not yet come to Russia, it seems to me."

Now let us see what would become of that modest priest if he were to express his opinions aloud.

Numerous as are the various sects in Russian nonconformity, a great many of them comprise a very limited number of adherents. The Old Believers is the only very large group. The next in number are the Dukhobortzi, whose life in the Caucasus was made so intolerable with arbitrary restraints and cruelty that they emigrated to Canada—thanks to Tolstoi. But many of the so-called sects consist of a score or two of people; some of even less. That is why, in speaking of the Government's attitude towards them, one should include as well the separate, individual cases of "revolting erring minds," which are considered just as dangerous for the country as the leaders of various sects are.

The prohibited doubts of the "erring minds" at the bottom of the ecclesiastical ladder are supposed to be particularly impudent—because Holy Russia is meant to enter the Kingdom of Heaven by that ladder only.

The great danger for Russia which the Holy Synod sees in religious errors lies in the simple fact that most

of them have a touch of a political nature in them: for every religious frame of mind different from the prescribed one is bound to be a symptom of revolt. Most sects disapprove of the oath of allegiance and of conscription: this is put down as disobedience to the laws of God. They deny the holiness of the Monarch's person and the holiness of the Holy Synod: this breathes of insurrection against the sacredness of the most sacred things! They will not pay Government taxes, a "most heretical" idea! . . . English passive resisters would be denounced and prosecuted by the Russian Government as adherents of the "religious" sect of *Non-payers;* this is the actual denomination, and there are some two scores or so of people belonging to that sect in Russia.

Allowing for some distinction in detail, most sects combine the inevitable political nature of their "religious disobedience" with purely religious principles; beginning with the *Dukhobortzi,* continuing with the *Molokane,* and ending by the small groups of the *Bieguni* (Runaways), *Stranniki* (Wanderers), *Nemoliaki* (Non-prayers), *Bieloristzi* (White-robed), they all believe in inward spiritual prayer, but do not accept any church ritual or sacrament, and think that salvation can be achieved only through spiritual purification.

I have not been able to find the derivation of the word *Molokane,* but in any case they are *not* "drinkers of milk," as is stated in "The Russian People," by Mr. Maurice Baring. The Molokane's leading principles are most spiritual and elevated. The English author

has been misled either by some Russians who evidently did not trouble about the point, or by the root of the word, which means milk. Here are Tolstoi's words about the Molokane, with whom he was in most friendly intercourse till the end of his days: "The seriousness, the interests and the common sense of these half-illiterate people are wonderful."

As opposed to the large church of the Old Believers, who have their own ikons * and for the most part their own priests, the majority of other sects reject both. Remembering that there are nearly 25,000,000 people in Russia who are Nonconformists, one can see that the percentage of the seekers after spiritual truth is not hopelessly small amongst the orthodox population. To many of them the truth reveals itself in the idea that it is not Christian to make and keep money for oneself, to kiss the ikons, to lock up one's goods; to others it comes in a childishly simple form; for instance, there is one "religious sect" who call themselves, and are nothing more nor less than, *Simple Lifers*! I can well imagine the difficulty the English followers of the simple life will find in trying to believe this fact.

I should add by the way that the Russian gentry are allowed various private fancies, as long as they do not publicly preach them. They may live the simple life (which they do not), or they may have any private sort of hobby, especially if it approaches in any way to a

* There is a charming story on this subject, "The Sealed Angel," in the "Russian Sketches," translated by the Hon. Beatrice Tollemache.

smart *polissonnerie.* The police smile at these expensive pastimes, and the serious peasants wave their hands, saying: "The gentry amuse themselves!"—*Gospoda baluiut!*

But the moment some really simple man begins to teach the really simple life as a religious revelation that has dawned upon him, he is immediately called the founder of an heretical doctrine. This truly sounds a paradox. But the Simple Life sect was started by a peasant who had made money in trade, but sold all his property for next to nothing, and now lives with his family, all of them gardeners and vegetarians. They made a religion of it, because they arrived at those conceptions directly from the Bible, before any "vegetarian" ideas could reach them from more educated circles.

It is quite true that a few of the sects have abnormal beliefs as the foundation of their creed, beliefs of a most disquieting character, and in some cases of a perfectly disgusting nature to every normal mind, whether religious or not.* But for the present purpose it is of more importance to indicate the fact that any and every kind of search for religious truth has always been treated in Russia as a criminal and rebellious spirit. The freedom of creed granted in 1905 has lasted but a few years.

None of the old sects of a purely Christian and rational nature like the *Dukhobortzi* and *Molokane* have

* Although, by the way, according to Prugavin, there is no sect who kill their children, as is erroneously stated in the book "The Russian People."

ever attracted the sympathies of the higher classes. With a few exceptions they had no followers amongst the nobility. But the abnormal and mystical movements—like the *Khlystovschina* and the *Skoptchestvo*—did count amongst their adherents numerous members of the aristocracy, princes and princesses, nobles, landowners, officers, society ladies, high officials, and even the higher representatives of the ecclesiastical world, throughout the last two centuries.

The first of these two kinds of sectarians, *Khlysti*, believe in a true purification by means of attaining a state of religious ecstasy through a "holy dancing," mortifying the flesh by extreme fasting, self-inflicted slashes, spinning round on one spot till unconsciousness is reached, and so on. When this state of exaltation is attained they unconsciously "prophesy," and are considered to be in direct intercourse with God. Some branches of this *Khlystovschina*—there are many of them—verge on eroticism; but then all religions have been known to produce a psycho-physiological element which remains still uninvestigated.

The *Skoptzi* believe in actual mutilation of the body for the purpose of avoiding the "temptations of sin." Worship of their "living gods," as these maniacs, the founders and apostles of this repulsive creed, are called, existed in the capitals themselves, but happily in secret, until a raid took place. Not many years ago the leaders and their followers used to be sent to monastic prisons to rot in the cells or even in holes dug in the ground—whether they were illiterate persons or former *chinovniki*

with beautifully brushed side-whiskers. Yet as long as they remained comparatively sane, they would continue their preaching with such extraordinary effect that some of their guards would join the "orders of the great seal, or the white pigeon, through which alone the Holy Ghost speaks to men and women."

It is notable that Alexander I, at the later period of his life, under the influence of mysticism and Free-masonry, looked upon various mystic sects with leniency, and they therefore flourished in his time. The "living god" of the *Scoptzi*, K. Selivanov, lived in St. Petersburg openly and in comfort during the last decade of Alexander's reign.

All sectarians of this kind believe whole-heartedly in the ritual of the Orthodox Church, and perform it at their meetings with great pomp. The element of political disobedience is also entirely absent from their doctrines.

Describing some of the meetings of the "Apostles' Union" in the eighties, Prugavin gives a graphic description of imposing chinovniki and shallow dandies of the higher ranks of society, dressed up in white and scarlet garments, performing the duties of "bishops," "angels," "Christ's messengers," &c.

"If the Almighty would grant you the blessing of hearing the voice of the Holy Ghost himself, who sometimes speaks through us uttering prophecies, you would surely accept our creed! . . . Those prophecies are sometimes so striking that ladies faint." Being thus addressed by one of the followers of the "Apostles' Union," Prugavin became more anxious than ever to

get at the fantastic belief that seemed to unite these otherwise intelligent people. After having attended a few meetings "the blessing" was granted to him: this time the Holy Ghost was supposed to have descended upon a big, thick-set man of about forty. He suddenly began to shake to and fro, twisting convulsively and rolling his eyes; his face became apoplectically red, and he uttered a queer inarticulate sound. Every one fell silent and looked at him in reverent expectation. The "prophecies," uttered between strange jumps—as if some supernatural power were trying to lift the man from his seat and could not—proved to be the same old things about the need of confessing and the approach of the Son of God.

On account of this constant expectation of the Son of God entering the room, the members of the "Apostles' Union" never play cards, or join any ordinary dancing, or dress up, lest the Son of God should take them unawares. A young novice who longed to go to a fancy dress ball in a very modest black domino was severely reprimanded by her deaconess, who was shocked at the idea of the foolish virgin being surprised by the bridegroom in this unbefitting attire.

One of the "angels" explained to Prugavin that the first time the Holy Ghost spoke after 1800 years of silence was in Scotland, when he descended on Mary Campbell. "This is the only ground on which all churches should unite and abolish all differences in various religions and sects," the man added to the writer.

It is most characteristic that all this is sincere. More

than that: even the priesthood in Russia cannot be possibly accused of hypocrisy, however striking their other drawbacks are.

There must be something in the British, I think, that makes Mr. Bernard Shaw try to explain to them that the time has come when it is not worth people's while to be hypocritical; his exceptional speeches are generally met with laughter and there the matter ends. In Russia hypocrisy became something out of the question before it was ever born. I firmly believe that even the "Black Hundreds"—whether hooligans themselves or members of the "Union of True Russians," the reactionary mediocrity, or the highest officialdom—are not hypocritical either; whenever people *are* orthodox, they are blindly, naïvely, specifically orthodox; it is their chief virtue and their excuse, as well as their error. The fingers of an imposing chinovnik, folded in the sign of the cross, flutter over a single button of his uniform about a hundred times while he is talking to his neighbour in the church; a fat merchant over-eats himself with caviare in the place of meat in Lent and washes it all down with a quantity of champagne—and they both of them sincerely think that they are pious orthodox Christians and whole-heartedly thank God and kiss the ikons for this great blessing. Gentle, pale, and perfumed old ladies humiliate themselves before some scoundrel whom they take for a "godly man"—and their high-strung nerves tingle with religious ecstasy.

Religious infatuation and all sorts of mysticism

amongst the orthodox patriots of society are not prosecuted. It is only the simple people—who have come in their darkness to some grotesque, or innocent, or noble solution of what to them constitutes life's problem —these alone are not to be tolerated. So they remain ever silent, or re-baptize themselves; pray without ikons, or do not pray at all; burn or starve themselves rather than give in; or lead a naïvely Christian life which does no harm to anybody. Yet the most cruel attacks are made on them. For instance, in 1897 the police suddenly began to steal small children, boys and girls, from the homes of the Molokane, in the Government of Samara. One can well imagine the horror of the parents—all of them described by Tolstoi as " most interesting and sensible people." Parents streamed into Samara with their heartrending complaints and demands; but neither the Archbishop nor the gendarmes, nor the missionaries, nor the Governor would listen or give them any explanations. At the Archbishop's office they were told that the business concerned only the police; while the police had only the usual reply for them: " Off with you! You may complain wherever you please."

It was only with great difficulty that the Molokane found out that their children were concealed in various monasteries and nunneries. The question " for how long " remained unanswered. At last the orthodox missionaries explained to them that the children were to remain locked in until their parents " gave up their heresy." Meanwhile the little ones were to be baptized

by the Holy Orthodox Church and brought up in her holy creed. Time went on, and nothing was done. Some of the parents were allowed to see their children for a few moments, which only increased their suffering. Whole villages inhabited by the Molokane were beginning to show signs of revolt. Notwithstanding numerous letters to St. Petersburg, the Press did not dare to mention the combined action of the orthodox missionaries and police.

It was not until Tolstoi took the matter in hand that it was seen to; his daughter Tatiana Lvovna went herself to Pobiedonostzev to plead for the unfortunate Molokane; then the Procurator of the Holy Synod told her that the case was due to the "over-zealous ecclesiastical officials in Samara." The children were returned to their parents, but the "over-zealous" spiritual leaders were never so much as reprimanded.

It should, however, be remembered that sectarians have never been prosecuted systematically; they usually have their special friends in Petersburg who warn them in case of danger: then they quickly hide the cherished belongings of their *skit* (secret headquarters), give an extra good refreshment to the local police and orthodox priest, fee some official or another—for they are generous in giving away money and do not drink themselves—and the storm goes by. But actual raids take place occasionally, then the *skits* are looted, the people dispersed, and some imprisoned.

The chief feature which characterizes intense religious mania amongst the upper circles of Russian society (as

opposed to the free spirit of the rational sectarianism of the peasantry) is a passion for making an idol of some clever " wonder-worker " or imbecile. Father John of Cronstadt was of the former type; Grigori Raspoutin is of the second, an ignorant scoundrel. His charlatanism in attracting the aristocracy, women in particular, was soon disclosed as being of the lowest sort, and he was banished to Siberia a few years ago by Stolypin, who disliked the man's growing influence. But a strange attachment to him remained at the Court, especially in the heart of the Tsaritza, who believes in his prayers only; so the scoundrel is back, secretly protected in the palace itself. So much for the queer aristocratic religious manias.

Now it is essential to return once more to the brief generalizations of Mr. Maurice Baring and also Dr. Angelo Rappoport (" Home Life in Russia ") about the Russian Intelligentzia being " candidly and totally atheistic and irreligious."

Having made it by this time clear to the reader, I hope, what the Russian Church is, consisting as it does of the Holy Synod and the ignorant priesthood, I would like to put the question: Does the candid rejection of both mean " total atheism " ? If so, Tolstoi was the first and foremost atheist. If so, our Intelligentzia *is* entirely irreligious. For to be truly religious in spirit necessitates a repudiation of the Holy Synod Church and of the piety prescribed and enforced by it.

Every one knows of the negative attitude of social democracy towards creeds and religion itself. And it is

no wonder that the powerful movement in this direction in the second half of last century, which roughly aroused Russia from her slumbers, brought with it a marked indifference to religious matters in general. Atheism partly, and frank indifference generally, prevailed in educated society for several decades. It was only the lower classes that went on with their naïve rational-idealistic revelations, while some mysticism remained fashionable in the dimly-lit poetical boudoirs of the smart set.

Then came the Revolution, and liberty of conscience was granted, to the premature joy of the whole country. The monastic prisons were emptied of the wrecks of human creatures, the prosecutions of the sectarians ceased. There appeared openly avowed chapels, not only of the old followers of Lord Radstock, "Evangelists," "Free Christians" (who entirely repudiate any church), and so forth, but all sorts of religious circles trying to find a *new* religion that would solve the problems of sex, labour, and property. The political conceptions of the masses, which are always confused in peasants' minds with religious beliefs, were now reshaped, and promoted a more vigorous growth of various sects. Presently the Holy Synod began receiving information to the effect that the Orthodox Church was falling to pieces, that there was "no more faith" amongst the peasantry, and that the number of sects was growing enormously.

Then the Government made a right-about turn, and the latest news is that all free chapels in the towns are closed and the prosecution of sectarians has begun

afresh. . . . Probably before long the monastic prisons will open their gates again; the ghastly shadows of the great inquisitor Pobiedonostzeff and of Plehve, the genius of "gendarmerie," seem to be still hovering over the land. . . .

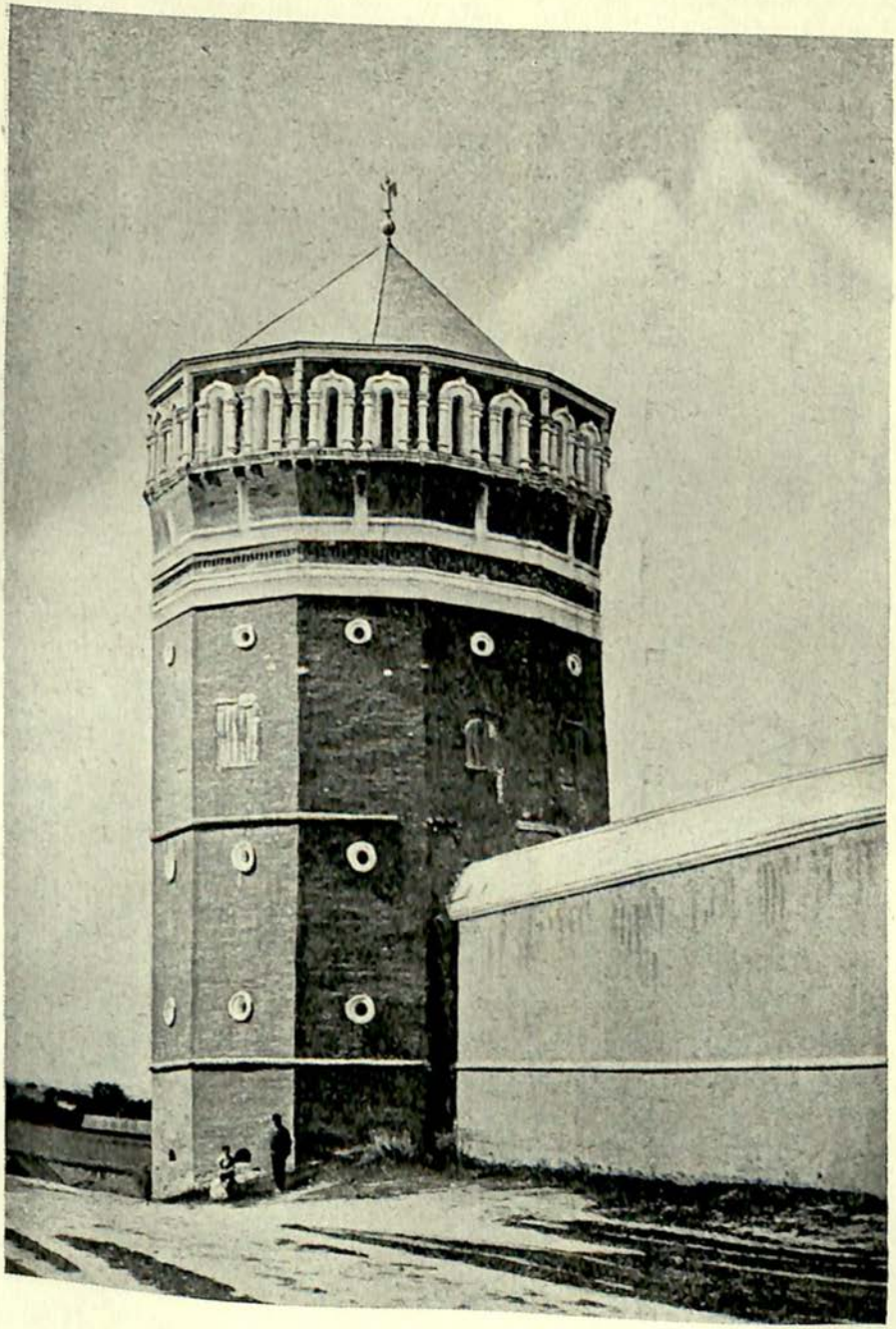
But the Liberation Movement has not only directed the former political conservatism of the bulk of the lower classes into a new channel—that of political free-thinking; it has achieved also another equally surprising result. For the last six years or so there has been a marked inclination amongst the Russian Intelligentzia to join the ranks of religious explorers, to try and find a new religion. A *new* religion, unlike the one of the Holy Synod: there the Intellectuals fortunately remain convinced "atheists." But Freemasons have appeared again (and already make the Black Hundreds in the Duma rage in anger); Theosophists have their secret circles and for a while had their own periodicals; Tolstoi's ideas of ethics and true religion attract more and more followers. The spirit of the "Students' Christian Union" has reached St. Petersburg and caused the flood of youths and adults to set in hitherto unknown directions; a branch of this Union has been formed and is making progress. All sorts of philosophically religious conceptions spring up like many shoots from the same root, and ethical and religious lectures attract more listeners than the vast auditoria can contain.

All this is very new to one who lived in the midst of the Russian Intelligentzia for a couple of decades before

1905. But nevertheless it is true. Whether this frame of mind can be called atheistic is very doubtful! And the fact that in this movement the Orthodox State Church remains left out in the cold only proves the more that true religious spirit in a Russian heart has nothing to do with the orthodox "Russian piety, Church and profound religious feelings" for which, with a perhaps pardonable lack of discrimination, so many trumpets have been sounded in foreign countries.

Now we can return to the question: What happens to schismatics or "erring minds"?

Two of the largest Russian monasteries were for centuries the Dead Sea wherein obstinacy was drowned. But forcibly to turn the initiators or followers of various forms of opposition into monks came in course of time to be considered insufficient as a punishment. In the reign of Ivan the Terrible the monastery *Solovki* (in full, *Solovetzki Monastyr*), on an island in the White Sea, possessed a regular prison with cells which were continually used for solitary confinement. Catherine II ordered the Monastery of Susdal, in the centre of Russia, to be used for the purpose of "imprisoning those criminals whose minds needed improvement." Presently this strange asylum—which provided nothing like medical treatment, of course—had a part of its enormous grounds and buildings specially adapted for the functions of a most gloomy prison. In the course of the ancient history of the land the Susdal Monastery had once played the rôle of a fortress; thus it naturally



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came to pass that the prison acquired this appellation; and the *Archimandrid* of the Monastery became at the same time the *Commander of the Susdal Fortress*, both officially and in practice.

The history and the functions of the monastic prisons had been for many years the subject of Mr. Prugavin's investigation, and he visited the Susdal monastery many a time. Pilgrimages to that "Holy Stronghold" are frequent, and the monastery proper is swarming with pious peasants bringing their coppers to buy and light millions of tapers to the Susdal Virgin and a multitude of other ikons. Prugavin, however, visited the place with the special aim of approaching that part of the monastic world which was meant to be a dead secret to every one outside its thick walls.

The town itself is twenty miles from the nearest station. It had its day of glory a few centuries ago, but now it just lingers on in a dead-alive atmosphere of drowsiness, sunshine, dusty unpaved streets, turnip-and-carrot gardens (the humble local speciality), booming church bells and . . . secrecy. There are in Susdal 5000 inhabitants, thirty churches, and four monasteries —one of the latter being the Susdal Fortress. Considering that it stands on the list of Russian monasteries of the first class, it is important to note that there is not one man amongst the Susdal monks who has been to the Ecclesiastic Academy; not one even with the educational certificate of an Ecclesiastical Seminaria: those who form the representative ranks of the Susdal Monastery have once upon a time visited some pre-

paratory ecclesiastical school—nothing else! The bulk of the monks have somehow or other managed to learn the alphabet, but they can seldom write any other word besides their own name. This is the sort of people who are ordered by the Holy Synod "to enlighten the erring minds" and "to make the raging schismatics give up their heresies"—and yet the latter is the only condition on which the prisoners have been sometimes released. No wonder that the efforts on the part of the instructors have remained absolutely fruitless. When, as happens occasionally, some man of culture takes monastic orders and joins a monastery, it means that he wants to make a brilliant career of a special kind; educated people do not stay long in the post of an Archimandrid, but become Eparchial Archbishops and Bishops, which implies a large salary and immense indirect sources of income.

A Commander and Archimandrid of the Susdal Monastery, showing an important visitor round his dominions, ignores the close proximity of the Fortress; but those exceptional visitors who have penetrated through the immense stone wall that divides the grounds of the Fortress from the monastery proper have witnessed a somewhat peculiar scene. In order to imagine the latter clearly it should be borne in mind that the monks of high rank wear long, loose, ample, black robes lined with silk, with enormous trumpet-shaped sleeves, and tall black brimless hats trimmed with very large and long black veils; a golden cross and stars on the chest indicate the exact rank of their owner.

"When the Archimandrid showed me round the quadrangle of the Fortress," wrote Herzen, "the subaltern of the guard approached him and stood to attention, saluting: 'I have the honour to report to your High Holiness that everything in the prison is in perfect order. The prisoners number so many.' In reply to which the Archbishop blessed him." (The blessing in the Russian Church is the sign of the cross, made with the fingers folded in a special way over the bent head and folded hands of the one who receives the benediction.) "What a mixture!" Herzen adds.

Several attempts on the part of Prugavin made at the beginning of this century proved fruitless. At first he tried to get something out of the simple-looking monks who were showing him round the walled-in but accessible part of the Susdal Monastery; but the moment he cautiously approached the subject, the obliging men became confused and uncommunicative, and tried to bow themselves away. All their answers were reduced to: "We do not go into that. . . . That is a secret business. . . . Have the goodness to excuse me, I must go," and so on. Only just a few of them mumbled: "Yes . . . all sorts of men . . . all sorts of criminals. Some of them for twenty or thirty years, but most die here. . . . The garden is full of graves, only no names or crosses are given them." So much Prugavin knew without their help.

At last, in 1903, at the time when the post of the Archimandrid and Commander of the Susdal Monastery was occupied by a man who had formerly been a colonel

in the artillery, the persistent ethnographer was admitted to the archives of the monastic prison. All his suppositions were proved by the statements in the Secret Documents to be correct. I may as well add at once that after a series of Prugavin's articles had thrown a garish light on the hitherto concealed monastic functions, prisoners were released from the Susdal Fortress, and the Government declared that the latter was empty. This was not true, for since this declaration one miserable curate has been pining away within its thick, damp walls. Besides, no order about the abolition of the Susdal Fortress has been given. It is only the Solovetzki Monastyr, in the White Sea, that has ceased to be used as a prison since 1902, both officially and in practice, and its cells remain empty—for the time being.

Here is a summary of some of the facts that were published, thanks to the Revolution in general and A. S. Prugavin's energy in particular.

There is no need to go into the details of monastic imprisonment; it is not the aim of this short study to make the hair of the reader stand on end with blood-curdling descriptions.* It is the general attitude of the Church and the Ministry of the Interior towards the "erring minds" that cries out for attention.

* I will mention two of the worst instances, and have done with it: there was a cell in Solovki in which the prisoner could neither stand up nor lie down—he had to sit for ever. At Susdal, an iron chain weighing eighty pounds and barely two yards long was attached to an iron collar at one end, while the other end was screwed into the wall of one of the cells; this torture was used as a punishment about the middle of last century.

There have been some ordinary, as well as extraordinary, criminals imprisoned in the monastic fortress, mostly for " ravings and objectionable deeds committed in a state of intoxication " ; but the bulk of the prisoners were always men * in a lesser or greater degree opposed to the State Church and therefore to the autocracy.

" The land does not belong to the Tsars—it belongs to God " . . . " God said ' don't kill '—and no earthly power has the right to make us kill." . . . " The chinovniki are not wanted for the welfare of the people, therefore we are not bound to pay taxes to keep them." Such are the fundamental beliefs of the religious rebels, for which they have always been imprisoned without any trial, or even against the verdict of a jury, as we shall presently see ; they are imprisoned merely on the word of any member of the police or the clergy, and the most appalling feature is that their sentence is never for a definite period of time, but " until the heretic repents and rejects his blasphemous ideas."

Considering the spiritual equipment of the monks in the rôles of spiritual leaders and " persuaders," one can understand the lack of receptiveness amongst those in their charge. " Most of the prisoners," say the Susdal Secret Documents, " remain obstinate and insist on their right of upholding their blasphemous conceptions stubbornly to the end."

The physical and moral torments of monastic imprisonment *usually* led to insanity—but even this made

* Or women—for whom there was a corresponding monastic prison in a Susdal nunnery.

no difference: the madmen remained for years where they were and without the slightest medical attendance, till the end came to release them; in fact, the prisoners who became insane were the only ones who survived more than a very short period of prison life.

The official lists of prisoners in Solovki and Susdal are full of cases where men, saved by insanity, spent in their cells twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or sometimes even more years. The following examples, showing the nature of the majority of the crimes punished here, are literal translations from the paragraphs of the Secret Documents, given by A. S. Prugavin.

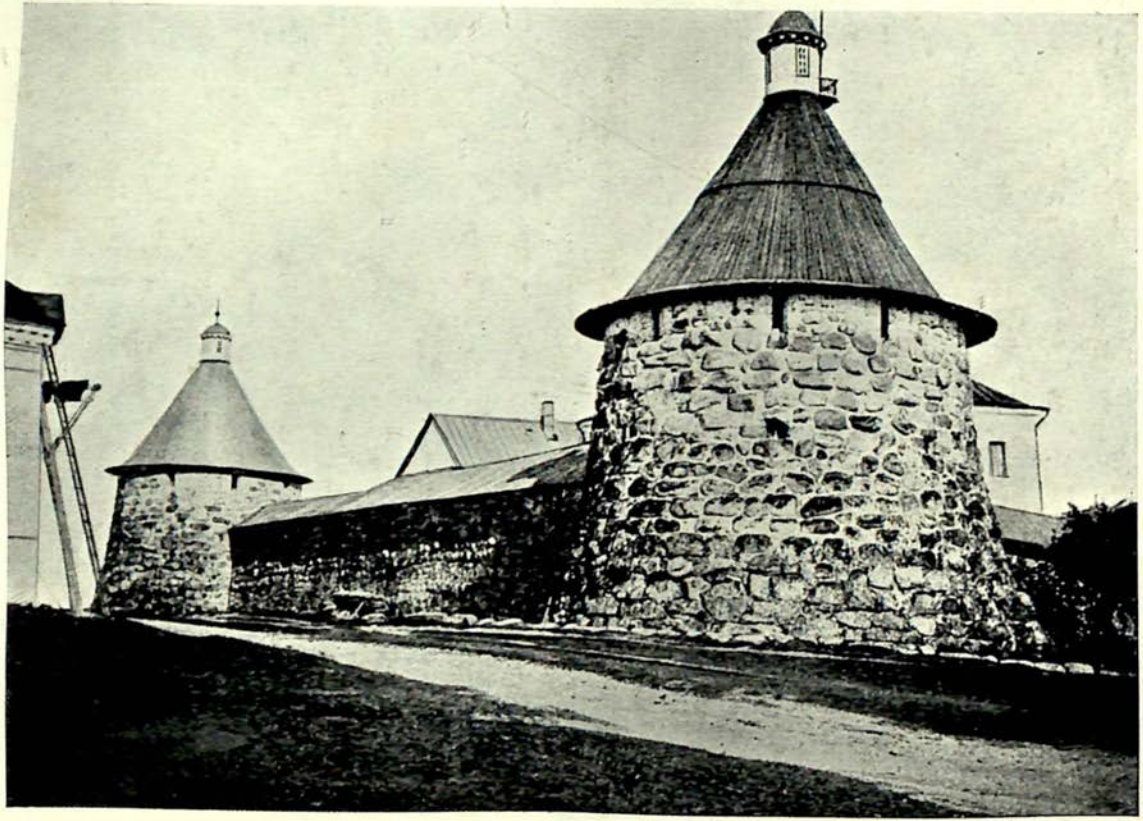
One peasant lived imprisoned in Solovki for sixty-three years—" for using language against the Church."

A soldier finished his days there—" for misunderstanding the Scripture."

Numbers of crimes are denoted as " laughing at the holy ikons " ; " speaking against the Holy Synod " ; " calling the Tsar names " ; " refusing to perform military service," &c.

Nicholas I was particularly keen on monastic prisons. Two students of the Moscow University were put into the horrible cells of Solovki for their sympathy with the Decembrists several years after the actual revolt of the latter had taken place. One priest suffered there in the course of the same reign " for misleading people's minds about serfdom."

In 1904 there was still imprisoned in the Susdal Fortress a parish priest who, a quarter of a century back, " being drunk, spoke about the Emperor Alexan-



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der II without due reverence." Very likely Alexander II himself knew nothing about it; but all orders of monastic imprisonment issued by the Holy Synod pass through the Tsar's hands for signature.

In his investigations A. S. Prugavin found reasons to suspect that, in addition to all physical and moral tortures inflicted upon the prisoners, a fundamental law of the Church herself is violated, namely, the privacy of the sacrament of confession. When a Father-Confessor finds some of the confessions of any interest he hurries to impart them to the Archimandrid.

A brief description of some cases that took place in the course of the last ten or fifteen years may show the nature of the latest prosecutions.

A young man, Rakhov by name, coming from a decent family of well-to-do peasants in Archangel, was just entering the civil service of his native town when he was gradually seized by the idea of following Christ's teaching literally. Consequently, he left his home and made a tour on foot, in which he visited the poorest villages all over the vast land of Russia—to console, to feed, to clothe, to read and explain the Bible, to teach every word of Christ, not theoretically, but in all sincerity, by personal example. He carried peace and love with him everywhere, and sobriety appeared in the most wretched places where he had stayed for a while. Seemingly, nothing could be more innocent and good—even from the point of view of the authorities, for he never denied them, never breathed the slightest shade of revolt against the Church or Government. But a

priest in a country town in the south reported him for teaching children "without formal permission." Rakhov was arrested, but was soon discharged with a warning never to teach anybody again.

Rakhov returned to Archangel, and, without the least secrecy, continued to do what his heart bade him do. Soon the local population loved him; his name became known in most parts of Russia, and money streamed in to help him in his work. Rakhov kept nothing for himself—absolutely nothing; in the humility of his heart he would go so far as to take off his own clothes in the winter and put them on the first man he saw shivering in the frost. In a short time Archangel had a home for baby orphans, a House of Handicrafts, and other similar institutions. Rakhov was continually among the destitute and they adored him, as did his parents.

At last, his praying in company with the poor and reading the Bible to them without asking permission proved the last straw to the forbearance of the local priesthood, and the Eparchia of the district demanded from the Civil Courts of Justice that Rakhov should be tried for "lack of reverence to the Orthodox Church."

This was an exceptional case, and ended as most similar cases would have ended if "religious rebels" had ever been tried at all: the jury could not find the least fault with Rakhov's work. Nevertheless an order from the Holy Synod followed, and Rakhov was taken to the Fortress of the Susdal Monastery. He was kept there for eight years (till 1902), in the course of

which time his father and mother died of grief. But what is most appalling is the fact that two Archimandrids in succession vainly pleaded for his release; six times petitions were sent by them to the Holy Synod, explaining that they themselves, as well as the Father-Confessor and the guards, all found Rakhov "absolutely innocent, devoted to the Orthodox Church, and obedient in every way." It was of no use. When the innocent man was released he was a helpless wreck in spirit and body.

In 1882 there was issued by the Ministry of the Interior a secret circular to the governors and minor police officials of central Russia, commanding them "to institute a secret supervision over the Count Leo Tolstoi and his intercourse with the Sectarians." This was the result of Tolstoi's interest in the sect of Molokane mentioned above. Tolstoi was always a cherished guest in the Molokane's villages, where he discussed with them the problems of religion with that genuine love for the simple people and that genuine ease of a man of culture and society which a genius can combine. Involuntarily one remembers at this point how the rank and file of the provincial police in Russia understand the secret supervision prescribed by their chiefs: their conception of it has been long since embodied in a slang expression which cannot be surpassed: "Don't let him go, but drag him." (Alas! it sounds hopelessly feeble in English, while the Russian *ne pushchat i tashchit* is saturated with the very spirit of the cat-and-mouse policy employed against "the enemy at home.")

But to return to Tolstoi. His public-spirited courage in persistently exposing the pernicious failings of the Russian Church was without doubt based on a profound grasp of the facts; but who in Russia has ever done as much as he for the development of truly religious thought and ethics? In Russia these two attitudes must needs go together. And we now learn that twice, in 1886 and in 1892, there had been a proposal to imprison Tolstoi in the Susdal Fortress! One of these cases came to light in 1905, through the publication in the *Historical Review* of the memoirs of Tolstoi's aunt; it appears that it was only owing to her intervention and her influential position at Court that the great teacher missed this reward of his labours.

A country priest, Zvietkov, was imprisoned in the Susdal Fortress for having written to the Holy Synod that, to his mind, it was wrong for the Russian Church to be commanded by a layman, the Procurator. What could apparently express more attachment to the Russian Church? But it was not orthodox enough for the Holy Synod—and Zvietkov found himself in Susdal. After four years of vain pleading for a trial he undertook a hunger strike, and twenty-one days after that he was carried just alive from his fortress cell and placed as a prisoner in the monastery proper. Prugavin saw him there in 1905. Zvietkov bitterly complained of the continued espionage: "Every one is spying here—from the Archimandrid himself down to the last novice! . . . The Christian monastery is but a prison, the monks are no better than gendarmes! . . ."

Soon after that Zvietkov escaped, and a quaint escape it was: he informed the monks of his address, asking them to send him his scanty belongings. Whether this was done or not is not known, but no attempt whatever was made to recapture the "dangerous" prisoner, to whom not an atom of justice or humanity had been shown for eight long years. "The only explanation of this extraordinary fact," wrote Prugavin in 1908, "is that Russia has shown that she will no longer stand inquisition for individual religious opinions."

Will she not?—I ask my countrymen.

Many people say that in the realm of Art a dreary analysis of sordid matter is not a desirable subject. But in the realm of reality—when it concerns the progress of a nation—the subject of the Russian Church, religion, the priesthood, the Holy Synod, and religious feeling should not be overlooked.

Western conceptions of this subject are very vague indeed. Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport, in his book "Home Life in Russia," writes that "Russia was created to reform the world on religious grounds." Mr. Maurice Baring, in "The Russian People," says: "Religion in Russia is the principal, if not the sole, mainstay of society."

Now, it seems to us—those Russians who dare to criticize the evils of their native land—that the statement in the first of these quotations demands an explanation which the author himself hardly gives in his pages. The words of the second quotation, to my mind, involve a number of inconsistent propositions.

Exactly which part of Russian society does Mr. Maurice Baring mean? Why should a certain reactionary section of the population be praised because it is really saturated with the "religion" of the Holy Synod? And what of those who are not society at all, but are in most cases incomparably higher in their truly religious receptivity of Christ's laws than the Holy Synod is?

"As long as there is a Russian nation," Mr. Maurice Baring winds up his book, "there will be a Russian religion at the core of it." I hope not! The prospect of the growth of Russia would be too hopeless if Russian religion remained what it is now—for this is the religion which the author evidently means. It verily needs a tremendous big stride! . . . And the only hope is that intellectual research in that sphere will lead to some light.

"Nobody attacks the Church, and even members of the cultivated classes who disbelieve religion altogether continue to regard the Church with sympathy and affection," is another bold generalization of the same author. But the urgent need of the present day in our country is surely not to have any vague praises sung to us. And—apart from politics—it is in the very regions just discussed that the iniquity of Russia dwells.

No! It is not praise, not respect, not sentiment on the part of Europe that we deserve *there*.

V

A LEGEND OF ALEXANDER I

A riddle unsolved to the end.—N. SCHILDER.

IN 1907 there appeared in Russia a book, by the Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch, called "The Legend of the End of Alexander I in Siberia, in the person of the Hermit, Theodor Kouzmitch." There had already been a number of small pamphlets on the subject, the authors of which admitted the possibility of the legend being true. The Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch clearly denies this possibility, and supports his opinion with many persuasive arguments. But even he admits that our great historian, N. K. Schilder, in his private talks with him (the Grand Duke), as well as in his vast researches on the reign and personality of Alexander I, made no secret of his own belief in the possibility of the extraordinary event. The Grand Duke also openly admits that the mysterious and unique personality of the great hermit, Theodor Kouzmitch, has never been disclosed, and that in any case this old man died in 1864 in a forest-hut without leaving the slightest clue to his identity. This fact, as well as the need for the publication of a "disproving" pamphlet such as the one by the Grand Duke Nicholas, eighty-two years after Alexander's formally announced end, allows us to deal with this legend as one that cannot

be naturally or forcibly consigned to oblivion. The great historian sums up his study of Alexander I in the following words: "*A riddle unsolved to the end.*"

Before dealing with the legend itself it is essential to remind the reader of the singular personal charm of Alexander, which made him almost irresistible to men and women, and of the extraordinary idealism of his real self in his youth; it was the sadness and tragedy of his career, and the disapprobation of his liberal aims even on the part of his best friends, that turned that idealism into distrust, melancholy, mysticism, and injustice.

At the age of nineteen, Alexander wrote to his beloved friend and teacher, the French Republican, Laharpe: "I have sworn to myself to abdicate; how can one man put Russia in order?" To another friend he wrote: "I shall live like a private man on the Rhine; only the day of abdication is not yet fixed." When he heard of Catherine's plan for declaring him her heir, he wrote to Laharpe again: "If it is true that they are going to neglect my father's rights, I and my wife will run away to America, and no one will hear of us any more. . . . The mere thought of my future destiny makes me shudder." And during his father's (Paul's) reign he again wrote to Laharpe: "I am the most miserable man in the world. The unhappy state of my country has changed my thoughts. I shall do better if I give her freedom, and then she will resist maniacs. A revolution must be brought on by authority itself—and its own existence must stop from that

ALEXANDER I IN HIS YOUTH

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moment: the nation alone must choose its representatives." . . . "We are four. When the thing is done, I retire. What sort of education should I choose for myself? It is most important. I want to stand on guard against despotism and tyranny." And there really existed a secret revolutionary committee of four men, one of whom was the heir to the throne.

When Paul was strangled by the prominent officers of the Guard in his own palace, Alexander sobbed like a child. He did not plan such an end—although he gave his consent to the plan of forcing his father to abdicate and was bound to know that this could not be attained without a tragedy. Remorse for that deed is often pointed to as one of the reasons that might have accounted for Alexander's extraordinary end.

At the news of Paul's death all Russia heaved a sigh of relief—of open joy. In the course of his reign it was not only the lower classes that felt themselves suffocated, but all society. This Tsar's mania was to "Prussify" Russia, to make every man a slave of military discipline. Paul was preoccupied with parades and manœuvres that exhausted everybody except himself; he indulged in the invention of various uniforms, and introduced a head-dress he designed as "a thing that will please the Almighty"; his court at Gatchina was nothing but a barrack where men were valued solely by their capacity to ride, to stand to attention, and to salute him according to his taste. He taught old heroes how to march. He tried to inspire awe, while he himself trembled at the least alarm.

He could not endure anything Russian in his land; national dress, songs, customs, harness and speech were banished—all had to be German and servile, soulless, and machine-like. The whole aspect of the capital was different during the four years of his reign. There was no trace of Russian temperament or vitality left about it.

On the morning of his assassination it was as if the sun had come out again at last. The forbidden *troika* flew by the thousand along the streets, and the tinkling of their little bells sounded jollier than ever before. Officers threw off their Prussian uniforms without waiting for any orders to be given out, and appeared in their former Russian dress, however creased and neglected it might look after four years of disuse. The people talked, smiled, congratulated each other in the streets. . . . "It was almost indecent," wrote a contemporary Englishman describing this day of joy.

Above any power of mind Russia loves a heart in a man, and she now beheld on the throne a twenty-three-year-old youth, extremely lovable and thoughtful, humane, kind, shy. His smile was the only sad smile in Russia on that day—and it remained sad for ever. For several years the Emperor of Russia was an extraordinary phenomenon. He was worshipped by society, loved by the people, loved tenderly like an adored woman. When he came to Moscow for his Coronation, and the crowds beheld him on horseback amongst them, they held their breath with the rapture of seeing him. He was surrounded on all sides so closely that they kissed his legs, his saddle, his horse—and not one person

was hurt. He was like a child in his mother's arms, safe in her embrace. There was no shouting, no cheering; only on all sides were beautiful expressions of love and tenderness, so characteristic of the Russian folk speech. It was felt that, if anything, the people were ready to call out: "Courage! courage! don't be so shy!"

This was the first Coronation that was not accompanied by gifts consisting of so many hundreds of serfs; and after that every day brought with it the removal of some unjust fetter. The secret sittings of the Revolutionary Committee, presided over by the Emperor himself, were started again, with the following programme: "To investigate everything, to reform all abuses, and to limit the autocracy of the government." The doors of the Peter and Paul Fortress were thrown open; some seven hundred political prisoners beheld the light of day again, and twelve thousand were set altogether free. The power of the police was limited, freedom to live abroad was granted, trade was unrestricted, private printing-presses were allowed, and all scaffolds were demolished.

It was Alexander's friends who hindered the development of all his good beginnings. In several years' time we see him an obstinate monarch, a true grandson of Catherine, sincerely desirous of granting freedom to all the world, but possessed with the idea that all the world must follow his instructions, and his alone. Alexander never refrained from showing sympathy, love, gentleness, or any fine feelings; nor did he give way to temper,

or show vexation or contempt. Tact and self-control were, perhaps, his most remarkable characteristics.

Hurt by Europe's lack of appreciation of his struggle with Napoleon, Alexander became a melancholy, exacting, gloomy mystic. Yet the high principles of his youth struggled even through the bleak atmosphere of his Palace (which, by the way, remained the only one that *never* had sentinels around it), and the idea of retiring never left him. In 1819 he warned Nicholas: "Constantine * is going to refuse the throne, and I shall retire. It is young men who are wanted." Before the war with Napoleon Alexander once said: "I would rather live in the forests of Siberia, grow my beard and feed on potatoes, than yield to Napoleon."

. . . . .

In the autumn of 1825 the Empress became very delicate, and Alexander, who at that time was devoted to her so tenderly that they were looked on as young lovers, decided to go for her health's sake to the south and remain for the winter at Taganrog, in the north of the Crimea. Just before leaving Petersburg, Alexander went in the evening to the big monastery outside the town and had a long private talk with a hermit there who always slept in a coffin; from his cell Alexander came out noticeably excited and moved. When his coachman, Iliah, who had been at his post for thirty years, drove him that night for the last time through the suburbs of Petersburg and out on to the

* The heir to the throne, Alexander's brother, one year younger than himself, whilst Nicholas was eighteen years younger.

long, long road down to the south of Russia, Alexander stood up in his carriage, and for several minutes looked back at the capital deep in thought, as if saying good-bye to it.

In the tiny "Palace" at Taganrog Alexander took an active part in arranging the rooms for the Empress, hanging up pictures for her, and making new paths in the garden such as she would like to have. At the same time he spoke more than once to Prince Volkonsky (one of the five men in his suite, counting the two doctors) and to Doctor Wylie, about his intention to build a private house for himself and for his wife in the Crimea, and to live there. "And you shall be my librarian," he added to Volkonsky.

Contrary to every one's advice, Alexander decided on a short trip through the Crimea, just to see the country, almost alone, and persuaded the Empress not to be anxious about him. On this fortnight's trip he caught cold, took the local fever, and returned to Taganrog rather ill. The Empress, Doctor Wylie, and the three aides-de-camp immediately tried to insist on his taking medicine and having a proper cure; but Alexander would not hear of it. "He has got something on his mind other than his illness," Dr. Wylie once remarked, after having steadily watched the man whom he knew so well.

And here we first come in touch with one part of the legend. Between November 5 (the day of his return from the trip) and November 14 Alexander, although ill, continued to work every day, and even went out

visiting the soldiers' hospital in the town. The legend says that in one of the rooms of the hospital he was struck by the face of a soldier dying of fever. The soldier is said to have been remarkably like the Emperor, so much so that Alexander could not miss the fact, although it was not his habit to think of his appearance; he even hated seeing his portraits, and never sat to an artist in his life. Alexander asked the local doctor who accompanied him whether the man was expected to live or to die. "He will die," replied the quiet, taciturn little man. This incident has not been related in any of the formal documents which refer to the Taganrog events; but it has been stated in print (like everything else that forms the first half of the legend) that Alexander did not die in Taganrog on November 25, 1825, but concealed himself and afterwards recovered; whilst some other man strikingly like him, with whom he exchanged places, died in the Taganrog Palace, was brought to Petersburg, and interred in the Cathedral.

In the course of his illness Alexander was particularly quiet, gentle, attentive to the Empress, and apparently obedient to his fate. This state of things lasted from November 5 till November 14, and is minutely described in the diary of the Empress, which is the chief proof that during *this* time Alexander *was* the real Alexander, and could be no one else.* The diary ends abruptly on November 11, but the following days are described in the official report of Dr. Wylie, and

* The latest investigators of the mystery state that the diary is a forgery, written many months after these events.

seem to be anything but extraordinary. Alexander more than once spoke of "God's will." He thought of how he had once been writing a letter to his mother and had lit the candles for the purpose, as it was at the time of a sudden thunderstorm; then his valet had come in and piously asked permission to blow them out, "as candles in the day-time are a very bad omen." . . . Now remembering this, Alexander said: "Those day candles were meant for me." But he still worked daily, and even made up his mind on a point about which he had been undecided for months: to arrest the leaders of the (coming) Decembrists' revolt, "if the proofs should be beyond any doubt." He knew all about the existence of this revolutionary circle, the first organized circle of officers and writers founded to win a constitution and freedom for the serfs, but he would not prosecute them before. Did he now make up his mind for his successor's sake only? Most probably; whether he thought of dying or of otherwise disappearing. On the 14th, when the fever grew worse and Wylie tried once more to persuade Alexander to take medicine, he exclaimed, "Get away!" and added, "Don't be angry with me. I have got my own reasons."

During these last few days, from November 16 to 19, Alexander ceased to speak. All the descriptions agree that he "became delirious and quite changed." *If* any substitution of the soldier from the hospital or anyone else for Alexander could have been effected, it could only have been done in the course of those three days, whilst the real Alexander was still conscious and

able to fulfil the desire of his life, and yet ill enough to make his suite think that he was near death. With his extraordinary self-control, one may, perhaps, allow him even this feat.* Certainly, if the feat was accomplished, it was with the help of people of the place, and not with the connivance of his staff. This is so obvious that it does not really need arguments such as those used by the Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch to prove that "neither the staff nor the Empress herself could possibly be suspected of having artfully deceived the whole country."

According to Wylie's report, Alexander expired pressing the hand of his wife to his heart, after which she herself closed his eyes, tied up his chin with a handkerchief, and then, in unspeakable grief, spent hours by his side. Prince Volkonsky and Baron Dibitch, the two aides-de-camp, and the Doctors Wylie and Stoffregen, signed the protocol about his death; but the next protocol, as to the dissecting of the body, was signed by the third aide-de-camp, Tchernyshoff, only. Schilder lays stress on this fact; but the Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch insists on its being of no importance whatever; he brings forward ample reasons to prove that the dead body of Alexander could not possibly have been replaced by any other dead man's body. But it is not this supposition that has given rise to the legend, and draws attention to it. Certainly

* When only six years of age, he once concealed from everybody an attack of bad fever, and acted as sentinel at his grandmother's door for several hours.

there would be no reason whatever for replacing the *dead* body of Alexander by any one else's dead body.

As soon as the news reached the Russian capitals an unimaginable tumult arose in Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw; Nicholas and Constantine took the oath of allegiance to each other; then came the disclosure of Alexander's will, and on the day of Nicholas' succession to the throne the revolt of the Decembrists broke out. Meanwhile, the Taganrog tragedy suddenly dropped out of sight. Even on the spot itself things did not look as if an Emperor had just died there. The Empress was taken over to the private house of some devoted citizen, and the little palace stood forsaken. The memoirs of an officer then on guard by the body show that he was greatly shocked and grieved by the heartless way in which the work of embalming was carried out. The two local doctors smoked cigars whilst boiling the herbs in a small kettle in the fireplace; two ignorant hospital assistants cut out pieces of flesh and turned over the body as if it were a log of wood; no servants, no sheets or towels were to be found in the whole place; an insufficient quantity of spirits was used, and therefore a quick decomposition of the body took place, until the exposure of it to the severe frost prevented its decomposing any further. At last the mournful procession started on December 29 and journeyed till February 28; it stopped each night in the villages and country towns, and was still more delayed by the death of the poor Empress, which took place on the way. During these two months the coffin

had been opened five times, "to verify the position of the body," as the official documents say—although Prince Volkonsky wrote before the procession left Taganrog: "It would be better to have the coffin opened for the mournful service here for the last time, because the face is getting black and the features are altered."

Volkonsky seemed to foresee the excitement of mind that would arise when the people saw the change in the so much admired features. According to Russian religious custom, the dead remain in an open coffin for three days, and *every one* is allowed to walk in for the "last parting," which means kissing the deceased and praying at his side; so that the home of the dead is usually full of a crowd of strangers. In the church the coffin is opened again, and, no matter what the rank of the deceased, even in the case of a monarch, people are allowed to take a last look. It is only of late that this custom has been modified.

Before the mournful procession reached Petersburg grotesque rumours had arisen amongst the common people. For instance: "The Emperor was killed and cut to pieces by hideous traitors, and his body cannot be found. Therefore another corpse is being brought to the capital, and has a wax mask on its face." Or, "The Emperor has been poisoned, and all his body is so black that it is impossible to show it to anyone." Or again, "The Emperor is alive and sold abroad to slavery."—"The Emperor is alive and gone out to sea in a row-boat alone."—"The coachmen who are driving the hearse have received 12,000 roubles—and this

is very suspicious."—" The Emperor was killed by the first-rank noblemen, the meanest of all people."—" One curate in Moscow saw clearly that the face in the coffin was not the Emperor's, and so he was packed off to prison at once, and God knows what will be done to him."—" None will be allowed in Petersburg to see the dead body in the Cathedral."—" The Emperor is going to meet the body himself, as it is not his own, but an officer's, who was assassinated by mistake in his place."

" When the Emperor was in Taganrog, a soldier came to him and said, ' Get ready, they are going to kill thee and to chop thee up.' So the Emperor said to him, ' Would you like to be killed in my place ? ' So the soldier said, ' No, I wouldn't.' So the Emperor said, ' You will be buried as if it were I, and your family will be very greatly rewarded.' Then the soldier consented. They exchanged clothes, and the soldier let him down from a window by a rope. And the murderers rushed in and killed the soldier, who is going to be buried now."

These are the most interesting of the rumours, not only currently known, but actually preserved in original contemporary manuscripts amongst the secret documents of " The Taganrog affair." But it must be added that a great number of the latter are known to have been destroyed.

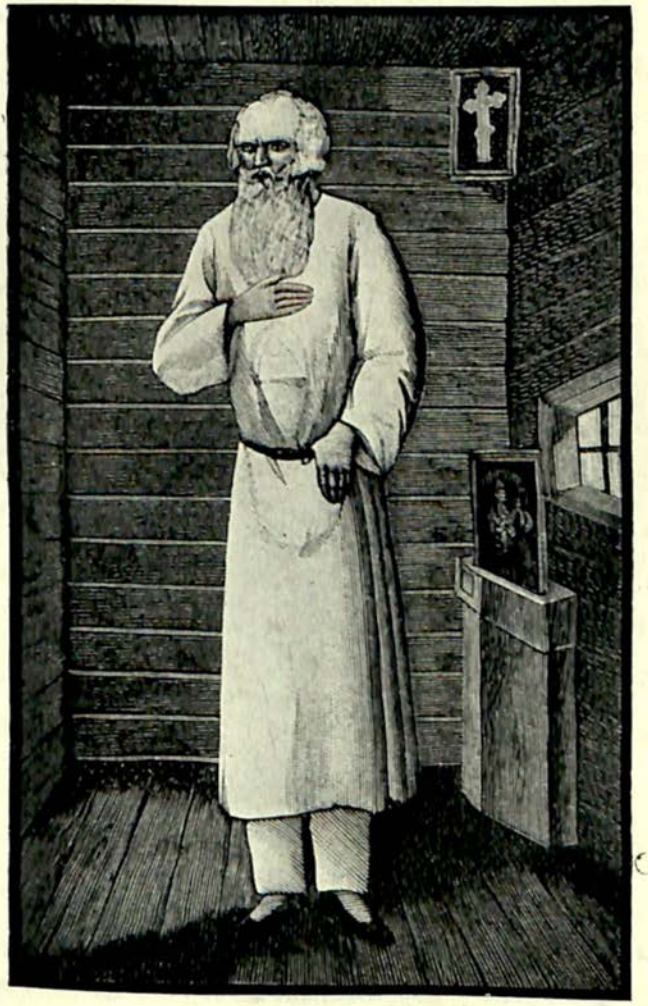
Interesting also is the fact that in the first year of this century Schilder tried to find the only descendant of the courier Massloff, who was killed by accident in

Alexander's presence as they were returning to Taganrog from the trip in the Crimea. It was stated at the time that Alexander was much shocked by the accident In the family of Massloff there remained a vague conviction that their ancestor had been hurried into the place of the Emperor. But, hard as he tried, the historian could not find out anything more about it.

. . . . .

Having finished with the Taganrog period of our narrative, we must betake ourselves to the tiny villages in Siberia, with their huts scattered on the outskirts of endless forests.

In 1837 (*i.e.* twelve years after the supposed death of Alexander in Taganrog) there appeared in those remote places an old hermit, who called himself Theodor Kouzmitch. Until his death in 1864 he lived a grave, solitary life in four successive places, the last of these a hut near a forest belonging to a merchant of Tomsk, one Kromoff, who in 1859, with great reverence, invited Theodor Kouzmitch to dwell there. This old man, without disclosing his past or his real name to anyone, became known at once from the time of his appearance, not only amongst the neighbouring population, but in all Siberian and European Russia. In the eyes of our people it is sufficient for anyone to lead a "holy" life to become highly respected and loved; but there was something in the personality of Kouzmitch that attracted to him educated people as well. And this was enough on which to build the second half of the legend, which without hesitation identified the old



THE HERMIT THEODOR KOUSMITCH

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hermit with "Alexander I, who did not die in Taganrog."[2]

I will state here only the known facts. When people came from afar to see Theodor Kouzmitch they found a tall man with something great and strangely fascinating about him, with a broad brow and a long silver-white beard, of reticent and gentle speech, like one who had known and suffered much, with manners instinct with natural charm, and a lovable, smiling look in his eyes that was not to be forgotten. His habits as regards tidiness and accuracy were exceptional. He used to walk up and down the field, in front of his hut, with the gait of a soldier; the attitude of his head and shoulders, and his arms folded at the back (Alexander's favourite pose) suggested power and command; his step was precise and alert. His pose on horseback undoubtedly expressed perfect ease, and indicated practice since boyhood. There was an extraordinary degree of gentleness and consideration in him, and a fascination in his quiet voice (one of Alexander's characteristic qualities). All these facts have been stated over and over again, and the Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch himself does not deny them. He also mentions that Schilder traced a great likeness in the features of Theodor Kouzmitch to those of Alexander on comparing their portraits, which, it must be remembered, were painted in both instances only from memory.

Kromoff's daughter, when twenty-five years of age, wrote in her memoirs:

"One day father and I came down from town to see him. He came out from his hut to meet us, and said: 'Wait for a while here: I have guests with me.' We remained outside, between the hut and the forest, for quite two hours. Then we saw Theodor Kouzmitch coming out and seeing off two persons: one of them was a young lady, and the other a young officer in a hussar's uniform, very handsome and very much like the heir to the throne, Nicholas Alexandrovitch.* Theodor Kouzmitch saw them off some distance from the hut, and, when they were parting, I saw that the young officer kissed his hand—a thing which Theodor Kouzmitch would never allow anyone to do. Then they nodded familiarly to each other till the guests were out of sight. When Theodor Kouzmitch walked up to us there was a smile shining in his eyes, and he said: 'My grandfathers, my parents, and my children saw me quite a different man. And now my grandchildren see me like this!'

"But when asked about his past he would invariably reply: 'God knows that.'"

He was buried by Kromoff in the churchyard of Tomsk Monastery. On the plain wooden cross were carved the words: "Here is interred the body of the Great Blessed Hermit, Theodor Kouzmitch, who died in Tomsk on January 2, 1864." † The simple grave was visited by many of the Russian aristocracy, also

* The eldest son of Alexander II and grandson of Nicholas I, who died when an heir to the throne.

† If this man was Alexander I, the latter reached the age of eighty-six.

by the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch, and later on by the present Emperor, since when a small chapel has been erected by a member of the State Council, Galkin-Vrasskoi.

Schilder, the historian, relates an episode of two old courtiers visiting Theodor Kouzmitch. One of them entered his hut first and knelt before the hermit without lifting his head. Then the old man spoke some words to him. The courtier looked up—and fainted. The hermit opened the door and said to those outside: "Carry him out carefully, he will come to. Only tell him not to speak of what he heard and saw." And the man never did.

Still more interesting is the unwritten fact that the Metropolitan of Petersburg at the end of last century, on hearing of the investigations and studies of Schilder before his famous work came out, smiled and said: "He would kneel to me to learn what I know." Schilder flew to him—and knelt—and pleaded. The Metropolitan shook his head: "No use. I am tied by my oath."

Theodor Kouzmitch left nothing in the way of documents except a strip of paper with several ciphered lines. They remained unread until a teacher at the Dramatic Academy in Petersburg lately suggested what he thinks to be a key to the hermit's secret. According to *his* way of deciphering the note it runs as follows:

"The Zeus His Majesty Nicholas Pavlovitch banishing into oblivion Alexander from which I am suffering and calling out to my treacherous brother Let my Power re-shine."

But why should *this* "key" to it be right? To say

nothing of the facts that Nicholas was not "His Majesty" till twenty-five days after Alexander died or could be "banished," and that the hermit never in any way showed signs of resenting his fate, is this note likely to have been written by Alexander as we know him? And, even if it were, would Nicholas have permitted all these pilgrimages to his banished brother, from the peasants up to the aristocracy and archbishops? The Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch puts it aside as some one's practical joke (which is possible), or as a key to a different sort of mystery. But more probably it is no key at all.

To balance all the fascinating points in favour of the legend, the Grand Duke gives the following arguments against its truth:

1. That the handwriting on an envelope addressed by Theodor Kouzmitch to the merchant Kromoff, according to expert opinion, bears no likeness whatever to the handwriting of Alexander. (But could not that handwriting change entirely with some thirty-five years of no writing at all, and at that great age, and with the possible intention of disguising it?)

2. That no one can show *where* Alexander had been between the Taganrog events and the appearance of the hermit in Siberia, *i.e* from 1825 till 1837. (But no one, either, can make even the slightest guess as to *where* and *who* Theodor Kouzmitch had been before 1837. Yet it ought not to be so difficult to trace the origin of another man of a similar nature and charm, if such a man had existed among the Russian nobility

until his old age, and then suddenly retired to the Siberian forests; whilst Alexander I, who knew so many monasteries in his country, could find shelter in them very well, and could conceal himself until he found peace in his heart and thought he was altered enough to live "in the world" . . . as a hermit.)

3. That when the merchant Kromoff came to Petersburg in 1866, and others of his family in the eighteen-eighties, their private interviews with Alexander II and Alexander III did not lead to anything; nor were the Kromoffs punished in any way, as rumour ran. (But then, again, to treat those who had been nearest to Theodor Kouzmitch with marked neglect was certainly the cleverest way that could be adopted to kill the legend.)

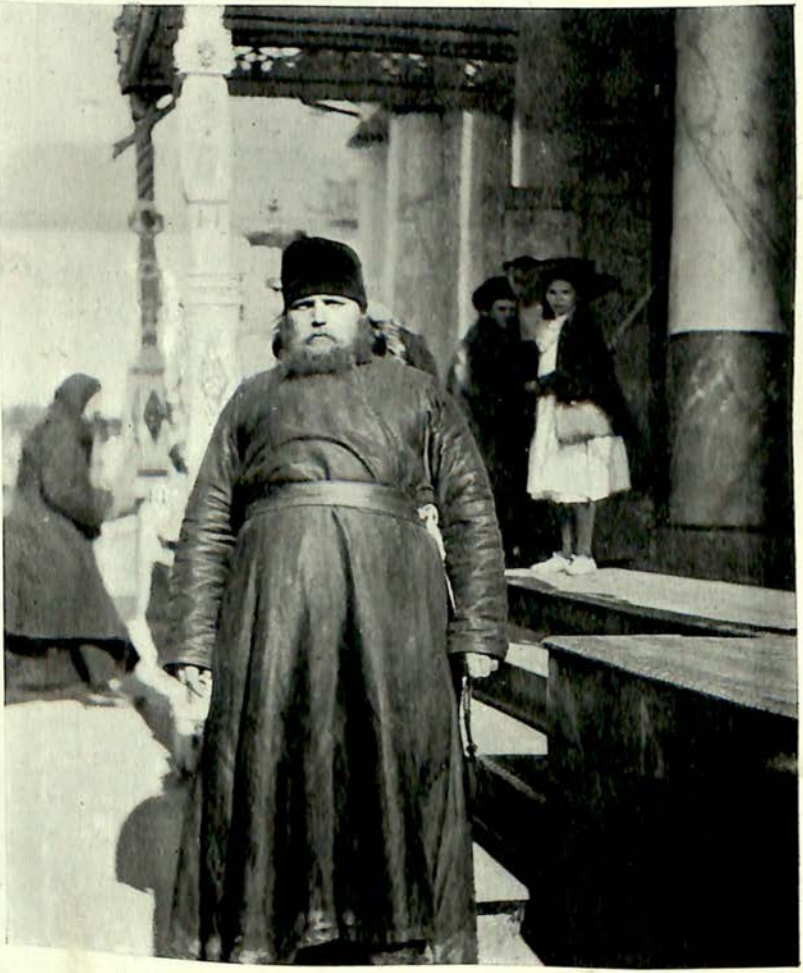
Yet the legend cannot be killed, however much may be written against it. For one thing, the identity of the hermit Theodor Kouzmitch remains unsolved. And the Russian people are too impressionable to neglect anything in itself so poetical and so grave. Besides this, the unique and pathetic personality of Alexander I is too well known and too deeply felt not to be considered as possibly ending in an extraordinary way. Whatever the reaction of the last years of his reign had been, Alexander I was in any case the most human and the most humane man on the Russian throne. And this will make the legend live, not merely as a "legend," but as an unproved possibility.*

* Since the above article was written, further researches have been made in Russia, and new proofs that the "legend" is not a mere legend have been found. A number of historians, however, refuse to credit it.

VI

THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION IN THE SIXTIES—AND AFTER

TWO or three "Institutes for young ladies of gentle birth" were founded by Catherine II at the end of the eighteenth century, and were the first girls' schools in Russia. There the daughters of generals, high officials, and noble landlords received, at the cost of the Government, a general education according to the old classical systems. The teaching of the visiting masters was not bad, but deportment and fanatical loyalty were the prevailing notes of those dull establishments. The pupils trembled before their mistresses, who rapped their knuckles for breaches of etiquette. If the girls did not freely distribute the contents of their hampers among the mistresses, they were made to stand in a corner at night. The occasional visits of the Emperor Alexander II brightened their secluded lives; but then the girls knew no better than to tear his gloves and pull to pieces his military overcoat in their enthusiasm. They showed a similar welcome to any one who was presented to them as a hero: an *instituka's* hero-worship was little short of doting. Each of them declared that she worshipped some prince of royal blood, or one of the instructors, or one of the heroes of literature (or, sometimes, an old watchman in the building!).



A Monk, Troitza.

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This gave a certain standing to a girl. Besides this, every one of them worshipped one of her chums; and many of the silly little creatures pined miserably away if their admiration was not accepted. It was a usual thing to eat chalk and drink ink for the purpose of attaining "pale and fragile beauty." A great deal of young strength perished within those thick walls.

Most of the girls came when they were ten years old and remained at school for seven years, even during the long holidays. Only the richest landlords would send horses two or three times in the course of these seven years to fetch the young ladies home for Christmas. Then three immense waggons or sledges would appear at the porch of an Institute; the first containing a lady as a chaperon for the long journey; the second, a staff of servants; and the last, a travelling kitchen and provisions. The largest estates lay in the centre or in the South of Russia, and a journey home from Petersburg, with all the halts to feed and rest the horses, lasted sometimes a week or more.

When the young ladies came home they would scarcely dare to touch the food at table; but after meals they would run into the kitchens and there feed heartily, encouraged, "poor dears," by the devoted old servants. When asked to sing in the drawing-rooms they would insist in all sincerity on holding a sheet of brown paper in front of their faces "with delightful modesty."

Such were the school-days of our mothers in the forties and fifties. But in 1859 the bold behaviour of a

young girl, niece to a professor, marked the beginning of a new social era.

She walked into one of the spacious lecture-halls of the University of St. Petersburg and asked for permission to attend. Permission was given. After that the girl came alone to every lecture and settled down to work steadily. The men students were at first inquisitive, wondering. But presently a serious and reasonable understanding was arrived at, and—in a couple of years—the numbers of men and women students were equal. Already in 1863 the Council of the University proposed the question, "What rights should the women students be allowed?" It was decided that they should be entitled to attain any honours degree, but could not become professors except in women's colleges—when these come into being. This was considered an insult, and led to a secession of women students to Switzerland.

In 1868 a Russian girl took the highest degrees at Zurich. In 1870, at the private residence of the Minister of the Interior, "Courses of public University lectures for men and women" were delivered, and soon after this the High Courses for Women were founded. About the same time the Medical Institute for Women was opened; many hundreds of lady doctors received their training there (not merely "nurses," but "doctors" in the full sense of the word). The first technical school in Europe for women was founded in Russia. The first woman civil engineer was a Russian, too.*

* Since this article was written two women have been appointed to Professorships of History and Mathematics at Kiev University.

The *Zeitgeist* was freedom of individuality and intercourse between the sexes. Women and men students visited each other freely in their rooms or lodgings, to carry on enthusiastic discussions on education, science, religion, and politics. The tea would get cold; the plain fare of bread and sausage remained forgotten on the table before them; the pale dawn would break, and the rising northern sun found the company still full of enthusiasm. Thus the students spent their leisure, while the days were full of strenuous work.

The sentimental romanticism of the Institute girl was replaced, even amongst the most aristocratic of the intellectual society, by extreme and fanatical simplicity. Weakness, shyness, "transparent beauty," and longing looks had no more fascination. Muslin dresses with their dozens of flounces were doomed; the type of the fifties was called in irony "The muslin girl." Tresses of beautiful hair were said to be "nonsense," and thousands of long Russian plaits were ruthlessly cut off; no mother's permission was asked. Those young girls who condescended to wear expensive frocks at their parents' great receptions compromised with their conscience by spilling, by mistake on purpose, bottles of ink over them at the assemblies.

After a time moderation was achieved. Extreme tendencies disappeared, while the effects of this dashing typically Russian educational revolution were so rational that Dmitri Tolstoi's deadening "Classical System" was hurriedly introduced to check the natural advance of the great wave.

The Military Cadet Corps consisted in the first half of the last century of four forms for the juniors and seven forms for the seniors. Boys were brought there when six years old, by their fathers, mostly military men. There were nurses in the building for these military mites, and many of the latter cried themselves to sleep in motherly embraces. But all the same they had to wear stiff little uniform coats of black cloth on which there was hardly room enough for the row of nine big brass buttons from the thick high collar down to the belt. Their helmets had screws inside them which pressed painfully on the children's heads, and the white "sultans" on the top waved in the wind so majestically that more often than not their owners were swept down on a windy day.

When the Corps anticipated an inspection from some General, all the boys (from ten years of age upwards) had to pull on their white tights wet on the night before, and sleep in them, to make them fit tighter on parade. When the several hundred boys fell in early in the morning for a rehearsal, the sergeants walked along the ranks with chalk and charcoal to touch up unseemly spots on the black and white of the uniform.

At the coronation of Alexander II in Moscow, the First Cadet Corps fell in on the previous evening, after a march of five miles across Moscow from their quarters to the Usspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin. The boys were not allowed to lie down for the night, only to sit on prepared pieces of leather; yet, on the dawn of the great day, at the first inspection, they were repri-

manded by their officers for the way in which they presented arms: "Your bayonets are breathing!"* cried the officers, swearing. All were, however, keen on discipline, and before a real faint no little lad would acknowledge his fatigue and take his place in the van which followed the battalion to pick up stragglers.

But the same *esprit de corps* inspired a comradeship among the cadets, and the officers—most of whom were ruffians before the sudden changes of the sixties came—could never convict the mischievous ringleaders. One thing only was good and plentiful in the First Cadet Corps' food, and that was black rye-bread. The boys actually lived on it. White rolls were a luxury, and were eaten with ordinary black bread as a relish. One of the Colonels, in the fifties, took it into his head that an unlimited amount of bread was too much of a luxury for the cadets, and arranged that no portion was to exceed two big slices. This infuriated the Corps. Immediately an order was swiftly and secretly passed from the eldest forms down to the youngest boy, that on that same night, as soon as the watchmen in the dormitories were asleep in their chairs, every one was to get out of bed and find his way to the bread-store. The order was obeyed with marvellous precision. Some five hundred boys assembled in the cellars in pitch dark. Not a watchman was roused from his slumbers. All the bread, down to the last crumb, was consumed. In the morning the authorities gasped: there was not a trace of bread to be found concealed anywhere in the buildings.

* "Breathing" implies in this case a very slight swaying motion.

Four pounds per boy had been eaten that night. Not a single boy felt the worse for it. The ingenious originator of this revolt was never discovered, and the furious Colonel had to hush it all up and return to the old rules.

Bad food was the only thing, by the way, which made the young ladies at the Institutes express private views on the established regime. A similar revolt at the Institute of St. Catherine was carried out with precision equal to that of the cadets; if anything, with a more brilliant audacity. When the soup became too intolerable one Sunday at the mid-day meal, the girls, with one accord, hurled their filled soup-plates out into the garden through the open hall windows. Four hundred young ladies in low-necked frocks with short sleeves, little white aprons, white stockings, poplin shoes, and velvet bands in their hair! And in the very presence of the stony head-mistress too! This proceeding startled the statuesque old lady to such an extent that the matter passed without any consequences, except that better cooking was introduced.

Cadets had for every dinner a big deep bowl placed in the centre of each table, with bad rissoles floating in worse gravy. Plates were not provided, only spoons; and each boy dexterously fished out a rissole with his hand, and laying it down on the bare table, held it fast, meanwhile helping himself to the gravy from the common bowl.

Punishment by flogging for all offences was due on Saturdays. But the cadets were rarely punished for

stupidity. Dunces far over twenty years of age were allowed to sit on the back benches in the classes. The teachers never troubled themselves about them, and the fellows sat there without moving, without passing any examinations, only twirling their moustaches and scratching their badly shaven chins, so long as they obeyed the rules of military drill and general discipline.

There was no limit to the age of the cadet boys, but there was a rule that they were never to go out on Sundays—when invited by friends or relatives—without a chaperon being sent to fetch them. Of a Sunday morning, after church, one of the house-masters, sitting at his table in the reception hall, would call out, one after another, the names of the boys who had leave to go. After the reading of each name followed the query, "Chaperon?" And often, when some big lout was standing waiting for his chaperon, there would resound a "Here I am!" in a piping little voice, and a tiny lass of nine or ten, barefooted, in a dirty short print skirt and a thick old shawl round her head and shoulders—one of the serfs from the backyard—would bravely emerge from the crowd. She would take her charge by the hand, and they would leave the room together. Outside was a huge puddle, which froze hard in winter. The military lout would grunt, in a good-natured bass, "Come along, you little brat!" and carry her over the puddle under his arm.

These hopeless inhabitants of the back benches formed a characteristic item of most Russian boys' schools before the sixties. They usually came from the

lazy, sunny South, and returned there, when the problem of their education was finally given up, to marry and to continue their lives in their own country nests, doing nothing, and eating cherry-dumplings with thick cream (*Vareniki so smetanoï*).

The cleverest cadets were rarely flogged. They absorbed all the knowledge worth having and managed to do the problems and essays for their chums ("for so many apples, or rolls"), and even to aspire to the friendship of the more humane teachers.

The games were rough and without organization. The "sports" were curious: for instance, one of the favourite ones was to eat everything that appeared on the price-list of the tuckshop in the porch in succession: "Quarter-pound of tea, quarter-pound of lump, half-pint of milk, two rolls, quarter-pound of butter, quarter-pound of salt lard, quarter-pound of honey, two herrings, two rissoles, one bowl of pickled cabbage, three pickled cucumbers, half-gallon of apples, &c."

The things had to be actually eaten (even the dry tea) all in turn, and the victor was he who got furthest down the price-list without a halt.

Indigestion was unknown; but the doctoring for other complaints was rough. In the First Moscow Corps was a famous little old German doctor who was said to cure all ailments by passing a red-hot iron down the back of the boys. It is inexplicable, but most boys liked the man and preferred to undergo his treatment rather than be bored by medicines in the dull hospital.

No care was taken of a cadet, however young, when

the time came to leave school for home. In the absence of railways, travelling was not easy for those who owned no horses and carriages and lived far away. Often, a little son of some widowed officer's wife had to arrange for himself as best he could. And it was a common thing for a cadet of ten or twelve to wander about the outskirts of Moscow on the eve of the long winter vacations, inquiring at the inns and ostlers' yards whether there was anywhere an *oboz* of peasants (a goods caravan) leaving Moscow for his remote country town on the next morning.

Many a time a slight little figure would be discovered on the top of the laden sledge-carts, wrapped up by the drivers in one of their sheepskin coats over his thin uniform and with a pair of their big felt *valenki* over his top-boots. Two, three, or more days the journey would last on the snowy plains which reached "as far as the eye could see," and sometimes snowstorms continued all the time. There were the short night-rests in the hot and stuffy huts with wax-candles or olive-oil lamps ceaselessly burning in front of the ikons in the "clean corner" of the only room. And there were only the grave-looking drivers for company; they did not speak much—a Russian peasant does not try to be funny—but their weird, beautiful songs floated through the frosty air, and there was something motherly in their serious way of treating the young passengers from whom they would never accept so much as a copper coin.

It was in 1860, during those times of food-snatching and hot-iron curing, that the hated Colonel of the First

Moscow Corps was replaced by a new man. The younger boys knew nothing of what was in the air in the capitals; they only noticed that their elder comrades looked more and more brave and challenging when answering the furious generals; they knew that now the cadets from the higher forms would frequently steal out of an evening and drive in a cabman's sledge to the opera-house—usually three at a time—taking the seat at the driver's side in turns, as only one leg would go inside the box filled with hay for warmth. These unprecedented excursions were now followed by very brief storms, if reported. Occasionally the small boys were given books, which they could not understand; but they greatly respected the clever big boys, guessing that these serious books of theirs must be very important and good.

And then, there came suddenly an order from the new head-master that ten boys from the youngest form, in alphabetical order, were to come and have tea in his private rooms on the first Sunday after his arrival. The big boys smiled, but the little ones were alarmed. "Surely, there must be some nasty, cruel trick about it!" And they wandered about trembling and pale for the rest of the week.

Sunday came, and they were admitted into the nice dining-room of the director's residence. The big table was laid with tea, cakes, buttered rolls, and jam rolls. There was no one in the room except a homely-looking old nurse, who met the children smilingly and asked them to help themselves, while she poured out the tea

from the puffing silver *samovar*. For a few moments the boys—ten or eleven years of age—stood bewildered; then they instinctively snatched from the table handfuls of food, took them over to the wide window-sills, and began to eat hurriedly, looking askance at the old lady, who, bending over her business at the samovar, started a general conversation. In an hour's time the boys left the director's room, greatly surprised, without having seen him at all. Next Sunday came the turn of the first ten boys in the next form, and so on; then it was given out that all those who worked well would be welcome to tea once a week.

Soon the standard of work under the new staff of excellent professors rose surprisingly. There soon grew up a spirit of intellectual intercourse and friendship between them and the boys. Saturday flogging was abolished—all flogging, in fact. All the bigger cadets were allowed in turn to visit theatres and town lectures. Over-grown pupils were sent home. A good hospital was installed, and a new doctor appointed. Food improved beyond comparison, and the big pool in the gateway was removed.

The spirit of the times penetrated into school-life deeper still. Prohibited books on people's rights, on the history of the French Revolution, and on Western socialistic doctrines found their way before long into the lockers of the older cadets. Entirely new interests filled the atmosphere, and remained intentionally overlooked by the masters. The secret printing office of the Moscow University students had to stop its work

temporarily about that time; it was given over to the older cadets, who were busily printing "proclamations" by night, in the cellar of the cadet corps, under the ægis of an old soldier servant. When this occupation was reported by a zealous subaltern to the director, the latter stopped it, but did not report it any further.

The characteristic Russian tendency—to remain inactive rather than to be false to one's ideals—did not fail to betray itself amongst the young officers who left their cadet corps in 1862 and 1863: hardly any of them agreed to accept posts in the Army that was occupied in putting down the national insurrection of Poland, despite the offer of extra pay and extra rewards.

In a few years' time the adored director obtained permission for the cadets to enter military and engineering academies after passing the higher forms of the cadet corps. Soon Petersburg was swarming with clever scholars, who freely joined in the new social interests, and mixed with the University students, who were then starting the "to the people" movement. Thousands of young men and women, often from among the aristocracy, gave their lives to teaching the half-naked, dirty little children in the far-away villages, to nursing the people in the cholera- and famine-stricken districts, and to similar work, which is of greater importance than it appears to the distant observer. This meant struggle and suffering, because the police and the church administration were already on the look-out for *kramola* (revolutionary spirit), and local authorities

not only persecuted the young leaders, but tried to do their best in rousing against them the peasants themselves.

. . . . .

Following the evolution of the school-world up to the present date, it is easy to perceive a new phase during the last few years. For one thing, what was sufficiently revolutionary in this sphere fifty years ago naturally no longer satisfies the demands of the present day. The new ideas on education in Russia no longer find vent in a liberal attitude of the officials of the Ministry of Education towards their pupils; on the contrary, most of those officials remain as indifferent as Dmitri Tolstoi's famous "Classical System" made them in the reaction of the seventies and eighties; but, quite apart from the Government gymnasia, corps, and institutes, there are springing up now, like mushrooms after rain, small private schools, as private as any institution can be, to be tolerated in Russia. The people who start these schools and who work in them are all united by the idea of educating the children along the line of individual development and mutual trust, and between the children and their masters there exists a perfect understanding.

After 1905 and 1906, numbers of the best teachers holding these views were expelled from the Government schools for what was regarded as their evil influence; they united their forces and thus formed the nucleus of the coming free education, which is gradually growing under the sword of Damocles. The teaching in these

schools is usually the best that can be desired, although possibly too intense. The "ill-meaning" men and women give excellent courses in every branch of Science, Letters, and Art, very different from the dry cramming programme of the Government schools. By the way, it is only at these schools that the teaching of Russian history has become honest: very difficult it is, indeed, to instruct children in this subject according to the permitted text-books!

To avoid the cold grip of the Ministry of Education, some of these educational centres have formally affiliated themselves to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (one has got to belong officially to something or other in Russia!) and call themselves "Commercial Schools." There the boys and girls, thoroughly cognisant of the condition of affairs, swallow the compulsory commercial part of their programme in the two highest forms and thus pass the compulsory examinations; but in other respects they go through a much better, more varied, and interesting course of study than they would get at the Government schools. They have games and training in handicrafts (hitherto unknown to Russian schoolchildren), besides excellent classwork; and most of them are very keen on everything that is new and that distinguishes them from the *gymnasists*. The cynicism, indifference to work, and the enmity towards the staff which have been characteristic of the pupils in the secondary Government schools since the introduction of the "Classical System" are absent in the new private schools.

Of course the enthusiastic efforts of these Russian teachers did not at once hit the mark, and some of their first experiments were comically overdone. At one school in Moscow (called "The Home of the Free Child," and one of the first of its class) the pupils were always wandering from one class-room to another: they were expected to attend just as much of this or that lesson as pleased them! They came and went exactly as they felt inclined to, while the teachers had to be irreproachably patient and make the best of the circumstances, talking, like old-time prophets, to shifting crowds when these chose to listen. This novel system proved to be such a muddle that the brave little school soon died a perfectly natural death.

Less comical, but still amusing, is one detail of the management of the otherwise well-organized commercial schools just mentioned. The Russians are a brave nation whenever an idea is to be carried into practice! (Forgive me, my beloved people, a touch of irony in this instance!) English games are good for physical training? All right. Football?—We shall have it. There are no grounds of any description, not a square inch, belonging to these new schools; they are modestly situated in flats in some large mansions in Petersburg, which is not so advanced—in the matter of football—as Moscow! But this trifling consideration will not prevent the enthusiastic masters from adopting a new thing of educational value. There are no grounds, but there is a real English football itself, and there is

the large pebble-paved quadrangle, where the logs of firewood are piled—and above all there is the willingness!

There is nothing to prevent the game: no policeman has called with a warning about it. So off goes the jolly company. . . . And great is the surprise of some demure inhabitant of one of the flats which hem in the third quadrangle of the mansions, when a football flies in through a window and dives into a soup-tureen, for the dinner hour is a movable feast in Russia, and incidents of this sort cannot be prevented.

The other small group of the new schools are "the free gymnasia." It is just like Russia to allow such a title when no one would expect it—and to treat it as will be seen below.

The few free gymnasia are also situated in the capital, but, unlike the commercial schools, they are not co-educational, and are only formally controlled (as it seemed until recently) by the Ministry of Education. Here is a little sketch of what happened to one of them, a girls' school, a few months ago.

There was a course of biology in this "free" gymnasia given by a former University professor. The parents and the pupils took care not to chatter about it beyond the walls of the school, for biology is not taught at Government secondary schools, and the girls were very proud of it and keen on it. Altogether, the curriculum at that school was not exactly one which had passed the preliminary inspection and obtained sanction from the Ministry of Education.

One morning the school inspector, a representative of the Ministry, was unexpectedly announced. For some reason or other he directed his steps without delay to the highest form but one, where a lesson in biology was in full swing.

"What are you teaching here?" was the none too polite question addressed to the professor of "ill fame."

"Biology," was the reply.

"Such a subject does not exist," and with this extraordinary statement, in the presence of the whole class and the head-mistress who accompanied the unwelcome guest, he quietly scored out with his thumbnail the name of the unlucky science on the time-tables. How this was to affect the instructor, the pupils, and the carefully arranged curriculum did not concern the guardian of the Official Circulars.

After banishing biology, the school inspector requested the class to say the after-lesson thanksgiving prayer. The girls did not know it (this official custom is also not followed in the private schools).

"I shall come again later in the day. You must know it then and say it. Where is the book of daily marks?"

"We have no system of daily marks," the head mistress answered.

"You will introduce it to-morrow. Where is your time-table of daily work?"

It was shown to him.

"Hardly anything but nonsense," and again the dictatorial nail scored condemnation across the whole page.

Ever since this inspection the poor "free" gymnasia is anxiously waiting to see whether it will still be in existence or not next term.

This chapter should not be concluded without a few lines concerning Shaniavsky's University in Moscow. It is simply and solely a temple of knowledge at its highest. Being a private institution, it does not possess the right to give its students a diploma, and this—as already mentioned—makes all the difference to their prospective careers in Russia. Yet all those whose single desire is to study flock to Shaniavsky's University from near and far. Judging from the appearance of the lecture-rooms, one would imagine that at least the whole of Moscow goes there for learning. There are men in uniforms of all kinds, civil and military; society ladies; serious women-students; enthusiastic boys and girls of sixteen or seventeen; officers of the army and navy; and middle-aged men and women of the leisured class. There are also University students who remain attached, for the sake of getting the diploma, to their old but ruined temple, Moscow University, while they actually study at Shaniavsky's. Many of the professors at the old Alma Mater have no pupils left, and the laboratories are closed: at Shaniavsky's the best authorities in Russia give courses of lectures in all branches of natural and social science. Any one of sixteen or over may attend as many courses as he likes, at the rate of ten roubles (£1) per annum for each course; and there are courses, specially arranged for workmen, for which the fee is only three shillings

per annum. There are no entrance examinations, no final examinations—no examinations whatever!

Founded at the expense of a single benefactor, Shaniavsky, this wonderful place is now voluntarily maintained by the Educational Society of Moscow. Indeed, the Society's funds have proved sufficient to endow further courses, such as the Women's High Courses of Justice, the Institute of Science (open to anyone wishing to do private research work), and "Lebediev's Laboratory." This last, now becoming recognized as the best place for specialists in physics, has grown out of a tiny laboratory on the ground floor, the work of which was carried on by the admirers of the beloved professor after his death.

The most marked feature of the last decade has been the influx of the lower classes into educational centres of all kinds; so great has this been that an alteration has been effected in the character of the Intelligentzia, particularly in Moscow. Having always attracted to its ranks increasing numbers of adherents from illiterate homes, the original body of highly strung intellectual refinement and self-sacrifice has come to recognize a new strain in its organism, a constituent more sturdy, more "sporting," and somewhat less idealistic. In view of the past history of the Intelligentzia, it may be all for its good that now, when it is in a state of moral exhaustion and hesitation, a less receptive spirit should be informing it in progressively greater proportions. There may be many forces latent in the Country of Extremes.

VII

STUDENTS' MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL LIFE

I

IT must be understood that in Russia there exists nothing like the English universities or colleges; each of the universities came into being, not gradually like Oxford or Cambridge, but at a fixed moment, by a decree of the Government and at the Government's expense. Students do not live together. They only attend the lectures delivered in the spacious amphitheatre-shaped auditoria.

In the largest of the universities, that of Petersburg, the number of students has reached at times ten thousand men. In view of the universal tendency towards idealism in the *Studentchestvo* (this denomination implies all students, men and women, of all higher schools, but chiefly of universities proper), its long struggle for obtaining autonomy had always been quite explicable. As to the political nature of the students' movements, the following pages may give, I hope, some explanation.

Attendance of lectures is not and never has been compulsory. There are no examinations until the student reaches the final ones—State Examinations—which give the right of going into the Government

service. The scope for private work in Russia is very limited, unappreciated, and risky; and it needs an enterprising public spirit to neglect the official diplomas which the State Examinations give. All intellectuals have diplomas from various high schools, but a number of them go in for professions which do not tie them to Government service: the latter is the only one that ensures bread-and-butter, but it also gives the stamp of a *chinovnik* in addition. Free professions include those of lawyers, doctors, writers, journalists, and artists of all kinds, with an increasing percentage of those of the merchant class who receive an equally good education. Landowners and a part of the aristocracy should be also added to this section of the Russian population, "Intelligentzia," which is rooted in the Studentchestvo, and thus explains the common expression, "Society and Studentchestvo."

Certainly there is the other kind of society, the smart set, composed of the majority of the aristocracy and high officialdom. These mostly come from the aristocratic high schools, of which we shall speak hereafter, while the rest of them, coming from the universities, have the spirit of the Studentchestvo toned down by the *milieu* in which they live; but sometimes they will say, with a charming, open smile, "Please, don't get frightened by my bureaucratic entourage," or "I am a general quite by mistake!"—and a few more words reassure you that Russia is not "going to the dogs."

The number of years one could remain a student

was unlimited until after the Revolution. Only since 1906 has the university course been limited to six years. This accounted for the political activity and the work of the "Kultur-trägers" amongst the Studentchestvo: for years such activity continued side by side with the university work, as long as it remained concealed. Those students who were banished from the universities for a year or two, for having taken part in demonstrations, were in most cases allowed to return, but of course this was not the case with those who were discovered to be associated with the Social Revolutionists, to say nothing of being involved in political trials. The presence in one's house of a Social Revolutionary pamphlet is held to be sufficient reason for eight years' banishment in Siberia; no return to the university is thereafter possible, nor any public career.

The sequence of events sketched in their main outlines below may become clearer through knowing that there are strong moral ties between all higher Government schools parallel to a university.

Universities.

St. Petersburg.	Uriev.
Moscow (the oldest, founded on January 12, 1755).	Kharkov.
	Warsaw.
Kiev.	Kazan.
Odessa.	Tomsk.

Institutes, &c.

Technological Institute.	Forestry Institute.
Institute for Engineers of Ways and Communication.	Mining Institute.
	Medical Academy.

Electro-Technical Institute.
Institute for Civil Engineers.
Historical Philological Institute.
Moscow Technical Schools.
Moscow Engineering Institute.
Moscow Institute for Engineers of Ways and Communication.
Moscow Agricultural Institute.
Kiev Polytechnic.
Riga Polytechnic.
Engineering Institute at Novo-Alexandria.
Academy of Arts.
Women's Medical Institute.
*High Courses for Women.
Do. at Moscow.
*Rojdestvenskie Women's Courses.
*Women's Courses for Physical Culture.
*Women's Pedagogical Courses.
Do. at Moscow.
Dental Courses for Men and Women.

Since the Revolution, Moscow has acquired several more higher educational schools, *e.g.* Women's Medical Courses, Women's High Courses of Justice, the Commercial Institute for Men and Women, and others. But these are founded by the Educational Society, not by the Government. The famous private university in Moscow—Shaniavsky's—has been discussed above.

Right up to the unexpected changes that resulted in recent years from demoralizing oppression, the Studentchestvo always lived, worked, and struggled together, and at its best must be considered as a whole. The only high schools which remained aloof from this democratic sphere were the corrupt and expensive "cradles" of the smart set; the Page Corps, the Lyceum, and the Schools of Law, all in Petersburg. But the spirit of free thought and the active outer world penetrated at times even into their midst; this is beautifully described by Prince P. Kropotkin in his

* In these "Courses" the women enjoy equal privileges with the men-students in the way of access to university institutions.

Memoirs of a Revolutionary, where he speaks about the socialistic movement in the days of his student life at the Page Corps. Generally speaking, however, the young men of these three institutions never wanted to be included in the mass of the Studentchestvo.

Just a word as to their personal appearance. All men students wear uniforms peculiar to each of the high schools; predominant, therefore, is the university *toujourka*, the every-day double-breasted coat, made of pale grey cloth, with a bright blue on the turn-down collar and round the cap.

II

> When the longed-for day of freedom shall come and Russia erects a monument to her liberators, one of the first places on it will be occupied by the figure of a student in his *toujourka* covered with blood.—KOLTZOFF, *late Privat-Docent of the University of Moscow.*

WHEN Tourgeniev first applied the word "nihilist" to a type of Russian student, he did not foresee how the nickname would be abused abroad, nor how absurdly long it would live. The short period in which "nihilism" meant the forgoing of everything romantic and æsthetic is a thing of the past. But in this country I still hear the general vague remark: "Your Russian students are all of them nihilists, aren't they?"

It would be a great satisfaction if I could contrive to convince English readers that the Russian *Studentchestvo* always had something more important in their ardent, receptive minds than simply showing their contempt for conventionality, sentimentality, and Russian piety, of which enough has been said already. The students of the sixties and seventies would not accept in their circles one who wore gloves or starched collars; and it is true that in certain memoirs a case is mentioned which will make my readers shudder with disgust; namely, that a certain company of students at the height of nihilism—*i.e.* fifty years ago—out of a passionate desire for unconventionality—stewed a dog for their dinner! But these same men

would not admit into their circle anyone who drank, or who looked at women cynically. The ridiculous extremes have come and gone. The noble extremes have been greater than it is possible to realise without special study.

From the time of their first appearance, the Russian universities had a distinctly democratic and liberal atmosphere about them. The fee for lectures was small—it began at £2 a year and grew to £6 a year; the time one could remain a student was unlimited, and no class distinctions were made. Clever men from amongst the peasantry, and even such sons of the clergy as breathed protest against their caste, were almost as frequent in the universities as representatives of the nobility, especially as the smart set of the latter preferred to send their youths to the Lyceum, Page Corps and School of Law. Thus it came about that the Studentchestvo, with all its ideals and hopes, its belief in enlightenment, its warm, young blood and responsiveness to enthusiasm, laid the foundations of the Russian "Intelligentzia" and became the vanguard of the thinking part of Russian society.

The first encounters with the police regime, after the last year of Alexander II's liberal reforms (1860–1866) and the setting in of the reaction, were therefore the more conspicuous. The slightest breath of socialism in the lecturing of well-known professors sent them to exile, and thence, via Siberia, to the west of Europe, where socialistic doctrines were at that time in full flood. A similar frame of mind amongst the young

students, men and women, and their eager longing for Natural and Political Science, made them flock to Zurich University. There they would not only work, but also expect socialistic reforms to be adopted at lightning speed. The stolid Russian socialist, Lavrov, at that time in Switzerland, was desired to prepare a detailed programme of action, in order to obtain absolute equality of political rights, the upbringing of children by the State, labour associations, community of property, free education of the lower classes, abolition of the autocracy, abolition of the Church, and abolition of any absolutism in administration!

Beloved as the great but moderate leader was, the programme he suggested did not satisfy the Student-chestvo.

"What!" they asked. "A whole generation to study the peasantry and to prepare it for activity in the future? To study theory first? To be satisfied with the struggle for students' self-government alone? To wait till history herself points out the time for revolution? Why, even the gendarmes won't get upset by such an activity! We would grow old before anything could be done!"

"But you cannot make a revolution at any moment you choose—not a successful one," Lavrov told them.

They would not listen: they craved to give everything they possessed—their strength, knowledge, time, personal happiness, life—everything, immediately! And they fled from Switzerland and the scepticism of an aged revolutionary back to their native land.

About the same time (1873) the Russian Government played into their hands by decreeing that Russian youths should no longer be allowed to study abroad. Thus the whole mass flowed into Russia in one big wave, pouring out revolutionary ideas, and learning, after having listened to theories, practical revolutionary work.

A number of people of that generation appeared to be born orators and organizers of political propaganda. Amongst these the girl students immediately found their place, side by side with the best of men, showing initiative and a lofty spirit, which once for all settled the question of women's position in the eyes of Russian society. Even ladies of refinement, who looked with disdain at their sisters' too-simple appearance—even they unconsciously benefited by the rapid improvement in the general estimation of woman—so great was the girl-students' influence; to say nothing of those women of the nobility, who did heroic work in waking Russia up from her stupor: the two sisters Korniloff, Sophia Perovskaya, Sophia Nikitina, Vera Nikolaievna Figner, Liudmila Volkenstein, and the "Granny of the Russian Revolution," Ekaterina Konstantinovna Breshkovskaya, who is still in Siberia and recently tried in vain to escape from her exile.

In the seventies there was not a district in Russia where there were no socialistic circles. Provincial society of the educated class—landowners, lawyers and doctors—was by that time so vexed by the numerous promises of reform made and immediately broken by Alexander II, that the movement of the young

A Russian Peasant Family and Cottage.

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intellectuals attracted sympathy, hearty advice, and even money from all sides. Here are some instances: A country judge gave for the students' propaganda all his property, £4000. This sounds next to nothing in England but is a great deal in Russia. The wife of a colonel of the gendarmerie worked together with her son. A professor of the Yaroslav Lyceum introduced a prominent socialist into the circle of his students; and a rich landowner, Madame Subbotina, herself promulgated socialistic doctrines among the peasants of her villages. Of course all this work had to be done in great secrecy, for arrests followed each time an agitator was found out.

"Going to the people" meant settling down amongst them as real artisans knowing their work; boot-makers, carpenters, hawkers, innkeepers. This necessitated peasant dress and all its attributes, including a touch of black tar, here and there, and a touch of dirt. Thus disguised, men and girl students were listened to with the feeling of respect which the Russian peasantry always has for anyone who is of their class, but is a "learned one." The fundamental ideas of socialism were not new to the *moujiki;* they understood them by intuition, notwithstanding the centuries of training in ideas of a kind diametrically opposite. But the thing that made them reluctant was the necessity for secrecy—the Russian national character is not used to it. For more than a decade, however, the young student-propagandists would not give up; helped by the doctors, midwives and teachers, they

earnestly continued their work, till they gradually realized that the progress was slow and the danger more than great. They recognized that it was marvellous enough as it was—that the moujiki attentively listened to and even discussed the writings of Louis Blanc, Darwin, Spencer, Hobbes, Draper, Marx's "Capital," "Das Proletariat in Frakreich," and so forth. It was too much to expect from the peasants immediate readiness for organized activity in demanding economic and social reforms. But the frequency with which peasants join the work of socialistic and revolutionary propaganda was striking enough, and proved that the students' expectations of finding great intellectual gifts and moral power amongst the Russian moujiki were not vain.

Towards the eighties the movement shifted from the remote country nearer to the towns and concentrated chiefly amongst the factory workmen. The work in the villages was considerably reduced to the kind which has been continued ever since: purely educational instruction and medical help, whether at the times of cholera and plague or not—and enormous labour in periods of famine. For instance, a case which was told me personally illustrates one of the difficulties this work entails.

One girl student left her "High Courses" in her last year with the intention of being of some help as soon as possible. She got a post as a country schoolteacher with a microscopic salary. All her revolutionary dreams had to be postponed in the first week

of her work when she realized that she would have no time to do anything beside the actual teaching and washing for the children. The village was a lonely one and very poor. The small boys wore only little cotton shirts which formed their underwear and outer garment combined; the bigger boys added knickers worn under these shirts; while the girls wore the little *sarafanchiki* only, with a small shawl on their heads as an added luxury. (In the winter these children wear sheepskin *tulupchiki*, a kind of overall with the wool inside.) My friend, the teacher, told me that the state of these garments was enough to distract her mind from the subject of teaching. When she asked the children's mothers to send the little ones to school clean, it appeared that hardly any of them had a change of clothes. So in came a tub to the teacher's room, and, after the class was over, a number of boys or girls every day remained with her, all of them sitting wrapped up in her own blanket while she washed their only garments and dried them at her stove. They enjoyed this immensely, and she said she, too, found those hours of personal intercourse invaluable. So it continued for over a year, and the children learned to appreciate cleanliness so much that from the earliest spring days they would run to the river and at least wash themselves thoroughly before coming to her class. Then it happened that a new *stanovoy* (constable) was appointed in the district. He said he would not report her for pampering the children if she would accept his personal attentions. The struggle which followed her

refusal was odious. Her popularity among the children and their parents made them side with her and try to protect her; but the village priest took the side of the scoundrel and in a few months the young girl had to flee to save herself.

Some recent letters from a young medical student who has spent several of his vacations (with no pay—they do it just for practice) in helping in those corners of Russia where there are no resident doctors to be found in a day's journey, are also typical.

"Some of the nights are particularly hard," he writes. "There is always at least one man who is intoxicated to the verge of madness, but who comes of his own accord *na ogoniok*—attracted by the light in my window, with the vague thought at the back of his brain that one gets some sort of relief or other in the doctor's hut 'over there' . . . Then some one comes with a leg or arm broken in work or through fighting, or they bring a child bitten by a mad dog, and tell you by the way that some woman is dying in childbirth. One thing comes piled on the top of another. This morning I found under a fence a man delirious with typhoid fever. . . ."

But enough of such incidents of this particular kind of students' work.

A more pleasant adventure befell two medical girl-students last summer in the south, where they had been privately practising in a district entirely devoid of doctors. They heard that some dreadful epidemic was raging amongst the children in a village some distance

from their head-quarters. Immediately they hired a cart from a moujik, who said he knew the way, and trusting him implicitly, as they were unaware of the route, started off on their journey. After a few hours of driving across the steppes they found their driver gaily bringing them down a very steep incline towards the bottom of a balka,* which at this time looked like a river. And a river it was, with enough water to cover the horses' legs and to fill the lower half of the vehicle.

"Lift your feet, *baryshni!*" the driver called out in the nick of time, making a sharp turn and continuing his vigorous drive down the centre of the stream.

But the reason for this manœuvre had already been realized by them with much hilarity, for the water was already up to the seat. Notwithstanding their position, they were able to enjoy an exquisite view of the swiftly flowing narrow stream, closely bordered on either side by the precipitous banks of the balka, which were thickly covered with masses of almond trees in full bloom. In speaking of this picture they could never find words to express its beauty.

"But how about your legs? Did you find the water eventually getting shallow?" I asked, when hearing of the experience. "Oh no," they laughed. "We had

* Balki are deep cracks in the soil of the steppes, the bottom of which are sometimes covered with undergrowth, sometimes form the bed of a stream. (Previously mentioned in the article on the Cossacks.)

to keep them right up on the box and hold our skirts in our hands for two hours—because it appeared that this was the usual road to that village!"

Let us return to matters no less remarkable—the events that caused the Russian Studentchestvo to add many a serious page to the history of the Russian fight for freedom.

The bulk of the students who concentrated in university towns, together with those of their comrades who returned from their propaganda in the country, found themselves confronted by a problem which, although primarily local, nevertheless had always presented in Russia a "revolutionary" character. They wanted their autonomy; but the freedom of meetings and of resolutions, and the organization of students' unions, of their own dining-halls, libraries and mutual help funds, were considered too "dangerous" to be tolerated. The only place where, at one time, academical freedom had been granted was at Kiev University, 1859–61, when the *Sturm und Drang* of the young generation made the liberal-minded education authority of the district submit to its demands. Then the students immediately seized their opportunity, and instituted the first Russian Sunday-schools and various "culture-centres" in the villages. This was quickly stopped; the Government took possession of the new-founded schools and subordinated them to the Holy Synod. The autonomy of the university was abolished, and a number of students suffered severely for upholding the national spirit of

love and work for the *Ukraina* (Little Russia). Proclamations to the Ukraina people were ordered to be torn from their places on the walls, but public sympathy was so keen that the watchmen used to hurry up the people in the streets before carrying out this order.

"Come along, read it quickly, we have got to tear it to pieces!"

The work of upholding the pro-Ukraina spirit was considered such a crime that one student (Andrussky, in 1847) had been imprisoned for it in the monastic prison of Solovki.

Thus, although a certain section of the Studentchestvo of all kinds tried to confine themselves to the struggle for obtaining the so-called academical autonomy, the majority naturally became more than ever involved in revolutionary problems. Prohibition of their own meetings and resolutions only made them demand independence for everybody; the endless series of arrests and banishments in the midst of their comrades only made them feel the more sympathetic with all political workers. Besides, their own impulse to strive on behalf of the oppressed had always been there. Thus the position of the Studentchestvo as a link between the revolutionists proper and the Intelligentzia became more and more firmly established.

Yet it is essential to note that the creed of the Liberals in the seventies was "political absolutism does not exclude law." Later, this proved to be a beautiful illusion, but the mass of students of those days still

sincerely believed that they were struggling for the existing law and not against it, and therefore called their unrest a social movement, but not political revolt. At that time the majority of them did not realize that the only "law" which was gathering Russia into its powerful grip could best be designated as "no law." As such it has grown steadily, until it has reached its culmination in the reign of Nicholas II. The word "revolution" was not even mentioned at the secret students' meetings until 1899.

But privately a number of men and women of the universities certainly belonged to the great revolutionary parties—the "Land and Freedom," and "Will of the People Party" (later the Social Revolutionists)—and continued working for purely revolutionary ends, year in and year out. There were very many students in the "Union of the Fifty" whose trial took place in 1876. In the memoirs of one of them there is a passage illustrating the attitude of the peasants towards the students' propaganda. When in prison the author met an ordinary workman who had been arrested on account of his own political "unreliability," as they call it.

"I say! Then you are a *barin?*" the peasant exclaimed on realizing that his fellow prisoner was an educated man; "a *barin*—and here you are in prison for the sake of us moujiki! . . . Yet, you know, there is but little good in your work. By your propaganda you try to make us conscious of things, as you call it—to wake us up to reality, and the rest of it. . . . Why,

A STUDENT IN HIS ROOM

From the painting by J. Kalinichenko

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don't you know that we, unconscious and unawakened as we are, would go, if we could, this very moment, and surround the Kremlin. . . . Axes would but flash in the air for the law of the Russian Land! . . . That's it, my dear one!"

When the police shadowed the "Fifty" and appeared at one of their night meetings to arrest them, they insisted on sending the police officer back to fetch a warrant. Whilst he was procuring one, they finished their tea in the presence of the policemen, quietly swallowing down with it their passports and secret papers. The trial of these people roused enormous interest. Petersburg society forged five hundred tickets for admittance to the Law Courts in place of the permitted fifty—for which they were imprisoned in their turn.

While in the House of Preliminary Imprisonment, the prisoners discussed everything before their trial; they communicated not only in brief opportunities offered by meals and walks, but continually—because the very stones, the rain-shoots and the drain-pipes "speak" in prisons. . . . Although most of them were highly educated people, they elected a peasant—Petrushka Alexeiev—from amongst them, to deliver the last speech for them all; he wrote it, it was corrected and approved by his comrades, and then he learnt it by heart, word for word. When he was reciting the last paragraphs of it in court, a loud murmur of appreciation arose. Seeing the effect of the man's eloquence, the President tried to check its impetuous course:

"Stop! Stop! I deprive you of the right of speech!" he shouted, but the big, determined fellow, knowing his goal, paid no heed. He simply raised his sonorous voice above the din of ringing and shouting, and unfalteringly thundered forth the final words of the first and last speech of his life. . . . "And the yoke of despotism, surrounded by soldiers' bayonets, will fall to ashes!"

"He is a real tribune of his people!" again and again rapturously exclaimed Spassovitch, the then famous advocate.

The next day the "tribune's" cell was overflowing with presents from the public: tobacco, fruit, roast game, sweets, turkeys, biscuits, clothes and linen. The big fellow smiled humorously: "If I had always been fed like this I should have been incapable of delivering that speech!" he said. He was afterwards killed by some native brigands in Siberia, when just out of the convict prison.

The quiet and sensible speeches of the students in the "Trial of the Fifty" revealed for the first time the civic feelings of the Studentchestvo in full publicity, and the effect was great. When the verdict was given, Spassovitch exclaimed, "This is appalling! Unlawful! They have pronounced their own verdict by giving this one!"—and a number of prominent lawyers swarmed into the cells of the condemned persuading them to appeal to the Tsar.

All the Fifty, however, were condemned to penal servitude in Siberia. Before being divided into batches

they ordered fifty little crosses to wear round their necks in token of their unity, the only property allowed to the *katorjane*—those who are sentenced to work in the mines. The author of these reminiscences lost his cross when driven with others barefooted across the snow-covered wastes from one Siberian prison to another.

The trial of the Fifty was one of the few public ones, and, as usually happens, called forth sympathy instead of the expected indignation.

To return now to the students and their own movements, which had to become revolutionary in the natural course of events. From 1874 onwards, unrest at the universities became almost the normal state of things. In 1878 the disorders in Kharkov University acquired enormous dimensions; to check them, military force was for the first time openly used, and academical meetings developed into street fights.

" Unfortunately," Plehve (then Director of the Police Department) wrote shortly afterwards, " these measures were not carried out in the right spirit: a vulgar era of Liberalism came in, and with it unprecedented disorders became prevalent in the universities." The " evil influence " of the students' own libraries, dining-halls, meetings, concerts, theatres and other public gatherings, appeared to the rising statesman to be " obvious," and they were banned.

This was the year when Terror made its first appearance in Russia. Vera Zassulitch, a young girl, shot point-blank at General Trepoff, then Chief of

the Police, in his reception hall in St. Petersburg. She wounded him, and was tried in open court. The jury acquitted her: therefore trial by jury for political offences was henceforth abolished.

When the Trial of the Twenty took place in 1882, the doors were literally closed by Procurator Mouraviov himself, after he had hidden his wife behind one of the columns in the gallery! Not even lawyers and advocates were allowed: the house was full, but with cossacks and gendarmes only. And this at a time when terror had already asserted itself; the prisoners were mostly members of the Terroristic Faction of the Will of the People Party, so that an open house might have included a public adverse to their system. True, there were persons amongst them whose names had the fascination of greatness for all educated Russia: Vera Nikolaievna Figner and Nikolai Alexandrovitch Morosov.

When released from the Schlüsselburg Fortress in 1905, four out of forty shot themselves, not being able to stand the overpowering sensation of freedom. Nothing can be better evidence of what twenty years in a Russian fortress means—although it is a fact worth recording that the above-named leaders and martyrs to political absolutism have written during their incarceration some beautiful poetry. It was thanks to the revolution that scores of heroic victims have been released, of whom Vera Figner and Nikolai Morosov still stand forth, great as ever in their superhuman idealism and strength.

Then followed the prohibition of common lodgings shared for the sake of economy by groups of students. In their place arose a kind of school-children's *pensions*, under the direct supervision of the university authorities, but they never came to anything worth mentioning.

"The police have to keep a strict observance over the private lodgings and manner of life of the students. And the university authorities are advised not to hunt for a cheap popularity as Liberals"—so ran Plehve's instructions.

Alexander III was well known to fear and to hate "the internal foe"—meaning thereby revolutionaries in general and students in particular—more than any foreign one. In his reign it was declared that all mass meetings were banned—these being described as "any crowd surpassing five people." So in 1887 came the last blow to the possible autonomy of the universities:

1. *Chinovniki*, called inspectors, were appointed to each of them, men who had nothing to do with university life and simply carried out a regular police supervision. Each item of their espionage they reported to "where it was due to go," as the common Russian saying runs. Everything that breathes of political free-thought is "due to go" to the authorities. The all-seeing eye of the political police is searching enough in every home, but at a student's lodging its penetration is increased tenfold.

2. The admission to the universities of poor students and those of ignoble birth was restricted.

3. The wearing of the uniform at all times and places made absolutely compulsory.

4. The State Examinations were introduced.

Difficult though the latter were, it was not this last item that upset the Studentchestvo; they had always contrived to find time for work under the high pressure of outside events, and their educational standard was not in the least below that of foreign universities, where students only study as they are desired.* No, it was the general tone of all these restrictions, including even the abolition of the professors' right to elect their university Rectors, that made the Studentchestvo feel finally insulted in their académic *esprit de corps*, and made public opinion back them up more than ever.

Taking part in the purely revolutionary work now became a matter of course. There was not one political trial in which some students would not be involved as active members. When in prison, they arranged between themselves ciphers, passwords, and mutual help in view of their exile to Siberia, where they meant to try and not lose sight of each other. They also established the principle that none of them who ever took part in terroristic activity should think of saving their own lives.

In this connexion I cannot let pass Mr. Baring's

* To illustrate the extent of the Russian High Schools' curriculum, it may be mentioned that the six-years' courses at the Moscow Technical Schools for Men and Women include no less than *sixty-five* very difficult examinations.

remark, "Russian social revolutionaries did not shrink from throwing bombs into a crowd of innocent women and children in order to kill one unpopular police-officer." I wonder, could the police officers who have been killed by the terrorists be described as merely "unpopular"? What would two "gentlemen" gendarme officers be called by Mr. Baring's countrymen who, when escorting a student girl to prison, undressed her in the railway compartment and amused themselves by extinguishing their cigarettes against her naked skin? I am taking this incident, about which every one in Russia talked at the time, purposely—because these two particular officers were rather unpopular! Yet they remained safe and prosperous. Thus it may be concluded that the lists of crimes at the door of the statesmen and their kind who have been executed by terrorists are somewhat more lengthy and heinous.

To follow the subject a little further, I would like to give some characteristic details of one of the most astounding terroristic acts—the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergey Alexandrovitch, in Moscow. His assassin, Ivan Kaliaiev, was a university student, at first in Petersburg and then in Lvov—a great believer in the principles of the Will of the People Party and a member of the terroristic faction of Social Revolutionists. His convictions and his passionate hatred were a heritage from his father, who in his youth had been literally sold by one landowner to another, and from his mother, a woman of highly refined nature, whose native town was Warsaw, "a town stained by

floods of blood, where each house cries aloud of the madness of heroes."

On February 2, 1905, after months of waiting for his chance, this young man had a bomb ready under his arm when he saw the Grand Duke driving through the quiet and empty Voskressensky Square. But, as Kaliaiev ran up, undisturbed, to the carriage, he unexpectedly beheld in it a woman and some children—and immediately stayed his hand. The incident remained unnoticed. Again on February 4, he had to make a sudden choice between a certain place in the Kremlin with only a few people about and the fashionable Tverskaya Street. He did not hesitate in his choice; dismissing the crowded Tverskaya, he went to the Kremlin, where his arrest, in the event of escaping death himself, was an absolute certainty. No consideration for himself entered at all into Kaliaiev's plans. He threw his bomb after a short run from a distance of some three yards. As soon as arrested he wrote to his beloved mother, asking her to swear to him that she would not plead for mercy; and when the false rumours of his proposed acquittal reached him, he wrote to the Minister of Justice: "As a revolutionary true to the traditions of the Will of the People Party, I consider it due to my political conscience to reject mercy.".

In the course of the last hour before Kaliaiev's execution, in the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Procurator entered his cell eight times, trying to persuade him to sign a petition to the Tsar, but Kaliaiev rejected it each time unwaveringly.

J. P. KALIAIEV

as a Classical Gymnasia boy

1895

J. P. KALIAIEV

in the Peter and Paul Fortress

1905

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Yet he did consider the life of the people in the crowd in having preferred the Kremlin to the thronged Tverskaya... What is more, he spared the life of the women and children whom he found with the Grand Duke in his carriage on his first occasion—although this might have delayed the attainment of his goal for an indefinite time.

Here is another detail concerning the same political assassination, just jotted down by one who knew the girl.

"I first met her in the beginning of 1904, when there were few who dared to struggle. But she, always so quiet and silent, so sweet and sad—she had already made up her mind.

"'You know that this means leaving behind everything? Home?' I asked.

"'Yes.'

"'Hiding oneself, having no corner of one's own?'

"'Yes.'

"'You may die. . . .'

"'Yes.'

"'You may kill. . . .'

"A silence. Then 'Yes' . . .

"I can still see her large eyes as deep as waters. She was always silent, unobtrusive. Never a word about herself, about her torments, as if there were no torments in her heart. Only at times there was the flame of a great love in her deep eyes. Terror was her cross; the coming death, salvation. Hating to spill blood, she was ready to kill.

"Once we sat on a boulevard. An orchestra played something near by, a throng of people passed to and fro, brilliant, bejewelled, gay—all strangers to us. Suddenly she spoke to me in a tone I did not recognize.

"'You can't understand—it is dreadful to live, knowing that we kill. . . . Because we do kill, all the same, although they are enemies of the people. Of course this is needed—blood is needed . . . but let me die for it too! Let me!'

"After that she lived in a laboratory which passed as her bedroom, took charge of it, studied, made experiments, slept on dynamite; month in, month out, silent as ever.

"At last her turn came.

"'Can you make a bomb?'

"'Yes.'

"'You answer that it will work?'

"'Yes.'

"Now she spoke so simply, so firmly. I thought she had got used to the idea of blood.

"On February 4, in the morning, I was waiting for her in the Nikolskaya Street to take the bombs from her. She made them in the course of the night in her room and loaded them—for the Grand Duke Sergey.

"I can still vividly see her crossing the road. . . . She sees me and smiles for a second. I wait eagerly: there are so many people about, such a traffic. . . . What if some one pushes her and she drops them? . . . I can hardly breathe. But here she is at my side:

" ' Take them quickly—take them—go ! Kiss Ivan. Wish him good-bye.'

" Another second and she was lost in the crowd.

" In the middle of that same day we were again together, slowly walking towards the Kremlin, waiting to see what would happen. She was silent again as usual ; only her arm squeezed mine in the unity of our thought.

" Suddenly a ragamuffin dashed past us, waving his arms violently and yelling at the top of his voice. ' The Grand Duke is killed—head blown right off ! . . .'

" Her arm dropped out of mine, her head drooped, and she sobbed as if something which had been buried rose right from her very heart. ' The Grand Duke is killed. . . . It is we—it is I who killed him—I did.' She wanted to give her own life ; but she had to take it from others and suffered without measure.

" Before the insurrection in Moscow she was one of those who prepared the bombs. It was a shock to us when we heard she had been arrested. She died in the prison as silently as she lived. Peace be with her. Her work of hatred was born out of that love which brings light into the world."

Perhaps Mr. Baring had never heard of these and similar cases when he was writing his severe statement. And no wonder : a most refined and enlightened man of Russian society, a prince who called himself a Liberal, when eagerly questioned at our English home (1904) about the coming revolution, smiled with humorous disdain and shrugged his shoulders : " Revolution ?

What Revolution? There are just seven rich Jews in Warsaw who are trying to make one."

If one can say that the workmen's discontent and disorders finally revolutionized the Studentchestvo, one can just as rightly say that the Studentchestvo helped the workmen and society to speak out. This became evident in 1899, when a students' movement acquired unprecedented dimensions.

February 8 is the "birthday" of Petersburg University. There always has been some boisterous fun on that night, often reaching a stage of damage—similar to that which has been known to occur at Oxford and Cambridge—which is the habit of youth all over the world. But singing and shouting, in the public streets of a country where a company numbering six is considered a crowd dangerous to the monarchy, are dreaded; and in the latter end of last century these outbursts of exuberant feeling were particularly undesirable. They were especially so after the unanimous demonstrations of the Studentchestvo, society and workmen combined, expressing their protest after the Khodynka tragedy (at the Coronation), and after the fatal end of the girl student Vetrova, who, when in the fortress, burnt herself to death after having been seduced by some one on the staff. In order to make further demonstrations impossible, the Rector of Petersburg University, in his shortsightedness and tactlessness, posted bills threatening with arrest and banishment all who took part in any disturbance on

the fiftieth birthday of the university. There was no need to remind the young men about the lawless interference of the police regime, which they knew only too well. In fact it only required another straw to upset the passive equilibrium of the minority. The unanimous indignation took the form of hissing and hooting at the Rector when he appeared on the platform of the University Hall. That was all. The noise ceased as soon as the unpopular man gave up his intention of delivering a speech. The anthem that followed was sung with habitual decorum.

The students had no idea what was coming—they had planned nothing at all. Moreover, they decided on the spot to leave the university in small orderly groups. But when these emerged from the large building (on the quay opposite the Winter Palace on the other side of the river), they found the way to the Palace bridge blocked by mounted police; surprised, they sought to cross the river by one of the roads that are arranged across the ice every winter; but the nearest one was found to be purposely damaged. Some students questioned the police officers as to the meaning of this blockade, but could learn nothing from them. So they swelled into one large crowd wending its way towards the next bridge. Two mounted policemen suddenly detached themselves from their squadron and galloped after the crowd with a challenging air. This was too much to be ignored. Snowballs flew into their faces. Then came a command, and the whole squadron suddenly charged the students and

casual passers-by without a word of warning. The *nagaiki* * flashed in the air, heavily lashing people's faces and shoulders.

The news of the attack spread like lightning. On the next day there was a students' meeting, which passed a resolution to stop work at the university until the Government would guarantee that the overbearing interference of the police, offensive to the least sensitive personal dignity, should immediately cease. This was the unanimous outcry from all, including the aristocratic and hitherto placidly loyal element, of which there is always a certain percentage in every high school. A country in which even Tory youths would not stand up against such an outrage would be irretrievably decadent; Russia is not.

The situation instantly became tense to the highest degree. Most of the professors sided with the students when the strike was announced, and refused to lecture. Others attempted to do so, literally under the protection of the police and attended by some ten or fifteen students. The corridors full of gendarmes, the students' meetings constantly going on in the vast auditoria, a few professors trying to lecture without an audience—all this made a picture to attract the eyes of all Russia. All high schools immediately joined the protest and struck too. The general tone of the strike was exceptionally reserved and dignified, as if the younger generation had suddenly grown up.

* These whips have lead and wire woven into them and can produce fatal wounds.

Police were stationed round each of the universities and institutes, so that thirty-two of the highest educational centres of the land appeared in a state of siege. Meetings took place daily, and their printed bulletins immediately spread all over Russia, insisting that the case was not a political upheaval. All that the Studentchestvo asked was the abolition of lawless violence on the part of the police.

In saying theirs was "not a political" movement, they honestly meant that it was not political because it did not go against the supreme power nor against the laws. But, carried away with idealism, the ardent youths failed to realize that their protest was political in so far as it referred to the state of things in Russia; they had no idea that, being young, and therefore more impressionable and braver than the rest of society, they were simply expressing everybody's objection to the cherished system of the Government. The attack of February 8 was the last item in the mass of humiliation which had been borne by the whole of society for three decades.

Students were immediately banished by the hundred from each of the high schools (Kharkov University was expelled to a man) and told to leave for their native country-places or depart to a remote corner of the land. Most of them had no money to spare for that purpose and would not obey the command. Then the administration tried to send them *po etapu* (making halts at each prison on the way); but this was troublesome and risky, so whole carriages were attached daily

to the trains that would take the "rebels" from the university towns far into the country.

When the Government at last appointed a "Special Commission to investigate the causes of the students' unrest," one section of the students, as well as of society, welcomed it, trusting that the Commission would really see into the matter, because such an amount of attention had never been paid to the universities before. This hopeful feeling was so strong that it influenced the other part of the Studentchestvo, and at the enormous joint meeting in Petersburg on March 1 it was decided to begin work, hoping for the best.

The head of the famous Commission was Lieutenant-General Vannovsky, the War Minister; he was known as a somewhat rough soldier, but straightforward, honest, and liberal in his own way, so there was some hope. This appointment was a better one than many others might have been; but it resulted solely from Court intrigues, and not from any genuine feeling of interest. General Vannovsky actually tried to do his best, so far as he was able to grasp the situation; he honestly believed that the Studentchestvo could struggle against oppression without implying the slightest shade of revolutionary spirit! His personal attitude towards the Studentchestvo in his investigations was full of *bonhomie* and a rough kindliness. In any case, he was quite indignant on learning about the methods of the political police and wanted to oppose them. But this would not do. In his report to the Tsar he suggested that co-operation and auto-

nomy should be granted to the students. This would not do either! And thus the printed official copies of his report were immediately turned into illegal literature and have been treated as such ever since. The end of it all was an Imperial Resolution reprimanding Vannovsky, the students, Petersburg society, and a few cases of "extra zeal" on the part of the police. Such an all-round scolding certainly could not solve the problem. It merely created laughter.

Long before this endless Commission was over, as soon as the students saw that their banished comrades were not returning, they struck again. In fact, in many of the universities they had not even begun at all. Thus some thirty-five thousand young men and women were sacrificing their learning, risking whole years of their youth and freedom, and waking up to the fact that the movement against the unlawful violence of the police proved to be one against the whole Government. Presently the epithet "political" ceased to be inappropriate—especially when it came to the last act of the drama.

The summer came, but in the place of lectures and examinations there were more and more batches of students being put in the trains and escorted by gendarmes and other police, and enthusiastically cheered by crowds of the Intelligentzia, who invariably came to see them off. When some students amongst these crowds appeared too sympathetic, they were seized and despatched by the next train. It was a hard task to hold out under these conditions; with all its ex-

perience—or because of it—the Studentchestvo was beginning to get depressed. Society had not backed it up as much as it ought to have done. This was partly because our men and women grow old too early in life (much earlier than the English do); burning the candle at both ends costs much, and the really energetic part of society is composed mainly of those who are still young in years. As soon as they have passed thirty or thirty-five many become too apt to "cool down"; age sets wrinkles upon their liberalism. On the other hand, have they not had a severe enough training in submission to make it explicable?

"You'll see, you'll see, it will all end badly for you!" would come the gloomy forecast of the experienced ones.

And it did end badly—appallingly in fact—although the failure certainly did not prove that the Studentchestvo had been wrong.

On July 29 an Imperial Ukaz was issued violating the fundamental Russian laws; condensed, it ran thus:

"The students of higher schools, for producing disorders within or without the walls of the latter, for declining to study and for carrying out resolutions carried in company (*scopom*), henceforward are to be forced into the army for the period of two or three years, according to the decision of the local educational council in the presence of one gendarme, one representative from the Ministry of War, and one from the Ministry of Justice. This punishment is to be applied without any consideration for age (even to students under twenty-

one) or for the state of health or physical incapacities or any rights resulting from the general rules about educational census and family conditions. No appeal against the decision is allowed."

This was unheard of. Students of eighteen or nineteen, the only sons of aged mothers, ill, lame, or delicate —all had to become soldiers despite the existing fundamental laws! And without the slightest likeness to a proper trial either, but on the ground of anything that may be called a disorder by an absolute tribunal! Moreover, the army itself was by this means being degraded to exercise the functions of a prison. The sadness and silence of a conquered army was manifest everywhere after the issue of the Ukaz, which contained these so-called "Temporary Rules." They were brought into force without delay. A number of professors suspected of liberalism were expelled. Others left without waiting to be asked. Those who danced to the tune of the Ministers received higher posts.

The Temporary Rules brought with them but a brief lull. In 1901 the Studentchestvo initiated a thanksgiving service in the Kazan Cathedral in memory of Alexander II, on the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of serfs. But this monarch by that time was already considered "revolutionary" for his one great deed, therefore several thousand people assembling in his name could by no means be allowed to pass quietly. On the other hand, the thanksgiving service naturally was not a sufficient vent for the wounded feelings which had been smouldering for the last two

years. Immediately after the service the students, coming down the broad steps of the cathedral, began singing "Gaudeamus Igitur." There are three words in that song, "vivat et respublica," which stick in the throats of the Russian Government, and the young voices naturally put as much vigour into them as they could. But their enthusiasm was not given much chance—the old trouble began afresh. A regiment of cossacks flew out of a side street and the nagaiki flashed right and left. The public had only snowballs and goloshes to retort with. A red flag appeared as if by magic. . . . Now this is another item which is too much for the Russian police. They cannot stand a piece of red cloth any more than a Spanish bull can. There came a flash from an officer's pistol. . . . Another . . . . No need to repeat the details. Moscow, Kiev, and Warsaw Universities followed suit immediately. In a week's time came a demonstration in memory of Vetrova, and on that occasion a regiment was found to be hidden in the Kazan Cathedral itself, ready to attack.

Just about that time the Government thought it appropriate to proclaim Tolstoi's excommunication. This gave a new reason for demonstrations in Moscow. Tolstoi was loved notwithstanding his religion, which would not let him encourage an active revolution. About this time the prestige of the Russian Church vanished for ever, and the enthusiasm of the crowds in Moscow acquired a new local colour. Tolstoi was lovingly carried about the streets in the arms of the

students, enormous crowds of the public following them and shouting: "Hurrah, Tolstoi! . . . Hurrah, Anathema! . . ."

The unrest at the universities again became manifest, but this time it was vigorously and openly upheld by the leaders of the Intelligentzia. A letter to the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of War was sent from a large body of professors, men of science and letters, publicists and lawyers: they explained in it that the Studentchestvo chose turbulent forms in which to express their needs because there was no other course to take. Having their hands tied on all sides the students could not set to work; the Temporary Rules continued to sow feelings of revolt and turned the punishment into martyrdom, and so forth. The political nature of the new movement was ignored in that letter, but the very fact of its having been written showed a step forward in the road of political life.

As a reply to this letter all universities and women's high courses were closed, and the Government decided to nip the Revolution in the bud. Every one of the prominent people who signed that letter was arrested in the night (in bed) and banished from Petersburg for three years. So were two popular professors who had been amongst the crowd in the Nevsky Prospect looking on at the demonstration in the Kazan Cathedral Square.

Next came a protest from the professors to the Tsar. P. Miliukov, the well-known Professor of History, was arrested as an instigator! Maxim Gorki was arrested

for radicalism because he went on the river with some liberal-minded professors and students. It was enough to be in any proximity to the Studentchestvo to acquire the epithet "revolutionary"; ordinary legal books, which happened to be favourites and were found everywhere in students' ransacked lodgings, became illegal for this very reason, and were exempted from circulation, as the technical expression runs.

True, by this time the Studentchestvo was revolutionized *en masse*. The students' Executive Committee was in close connection with the Social Revolutionists' Party and had its own secret printing offices working everywhere. The workmen now openly joined the students' demonstrations, sharing the risk. Tolstoi wrote his famous letter to Alexander III, and only the dread of a regular popular rising in his name prevented the Government from arresting the great teacher. It was his fearless attitude towards the atrocious measures of the Tsarism and the Holy Synod that made the population love him so much in the last decade of his life, notwithstanding the fact that, owing to his religion of non-resistance, he did not give as much help as he could have given to the Revolution.

Lately I was lucky enough to find a vivid picture of the first protest against the famous Temporary Rules in the notes of a student, A. Titoff, who was at the time in the Moscow University. His sketch of that particular demonstration (1901) and of its results was published later (in 1906), but has been since banned and is now a bibliographical treasure.

Here follow some pages of it, with a few abbreviations.*

"For the last two years, since the Temporary Rules have been brought into action, the attitude towards the Studentchestvo has grown in sympathy. Even those who had formerly blamed us for our interference with politics now begin to express their apprehension openly. The paragraphs imposing military service on minors, and even on those who have previously drawn the lot releasing them from service, are abhorred by everybody; besides, the officialdom of the Ministry of War and of the Naval Ministry have found this form of punishment quite incompatible with their own dignity. In it they have found the possibility of degeneration for the Army.

"It is within living memory that Alexander III came to the conclusion that soldiering as a punishment for students was unsuitable, and, fearing that it might cause undesirable results, declined this scheme when it was suggested to him. But now hundreds of students have been forcibly turned into soldiers, and each month emphasises the political character of the general dissatisfaction.

"In the course of the Christmas vacations every one in Moscow felt that the strain could not last any longer; something must happen to discharge the electricity. Just before Christmas a committee of professors assembled to discuss the situation, but could not come

* I explain in brackets a few Russian expressions.

to any solution. Whenever one went to see one's friends, one found that the conversation—lasting right into the night—always concentrated on the problem, what should the students do? So many of them were absent from these discussions in their homes!

"Meanwhile a new batch of recruits was sent to barracks from Kiev University, and then the tensity of the situation broke as though with a blow from outside. Meetings of protest were announced in all Universities. Ours was fixed for February 23. From the early morning of that day arrests were hurriedly made in the students' lodgings and homes before they were ready to go out and join their comrades.

"Having just escaped this exasperating fate, I approached the University and found our street thronged with students and the ordinary public; but everything was quite orderly, so that the traffic could continue undisturbed. The general tone of the crowd was bright and humorous. The pavement opposite the University was adorned with a line of mounted gendarmes, and the gates leading into our yard were guarded by two police-officers, who let us in one by one with a marked politeness: 'If you please, it has been allowed.' But this could not depress us. We were quite used to having our crowds embellished by jingling police accoutrements.

"We filled the court and corridors, and sent to the Rector to ask for permission to hold a meeting. Whether he would grant one or not was of no consequence: our minds and nerves throbbing with excitement merely wanted the outlet of such a challenge. Laughter and

fun resounded from all sides. The doors of the hall were opened in reply to our request and we streamed in in irresponsible high spirits. There were two people to each seat. Groups appeared upon the window-sills in the thick walls like pyramids, and people clung to the walls wherever it was possible. Of course, the University students' *toujourki* were paramount, but there were several dozens of men in the uniforms of the Technical Schools, Agricultural Academy, and of course many *coursistki* [students from the High Courses for Women]. Humour gave place to a keen seriousness the moment the chairman was elected. Formerly there had always appeared the two groups—'academists' and 'politicians.' The first maintained that one could not get everything simultaneously, that public opinion could not be relied upon wholly if we demanded too much, and that academic freedom should be the one aim of the students' movements; while the 'politicians' would persist that autonomy granted to the Universities would be indeed a fairy realm in the midst of the bureaucratic regime; that the Studentchestvo should strive to get self-government for the whole nation, through whose means it receives its education. 'No shrinking from self-sacrifice' was their motto.

"But the meeting on February 23, 1901, was the first at which both parties fused into one through the unanimity of the ulterior demand: 'Abolition of the Temporary Rules and return of all comrades from military service.'

"The debate was thus reduced to the question, What

form should the protest take, so as to make it possible for the whole public to join? Towards the afternoon it was decided on a general strike of all High Schools. The resolution was taken to the Rector. He said he would consent to submit it to the *Popetchitel* [Head of the District Board of Education], but on the condition that the police should make a list of our names and of all outsiders as well. This was naturally met with loud indignation. As though by magic, large flags unfurled themselves from all the windows, bearing the inscription 'Abolition of the Temporary Rules and Return of Comrades.'

"The reply to that was the appearance of troops surrounding the University and of the police sweeping into our court. But our spirits were so high that this was met with a burst of laughter from thousands of young throats. After a short discussion a resolution was passed unanimously to leave the building orderly and to go to the Popetchitel for the purpose of handing to him our resolution in person; but, should the police in the court detain us, to submit quietly and go without singing.

"On coming down we found the mounted gendarmes already occupying the pavement along the railing of our court, and the gates were closed. The Polizeimeister of Moscow stepped forward and declared that, according to the order of General Trepoff [Head of the Moscow Police we were to be arrested and taken to the Manège.*

* Manège is the name given to the Army Riding School, very similar in appearance to "Olympia" in London. Apart from its

"'By all means,' we answered politely, as agreed upon between ourselves.

"'Very good, gentlemen, very good,' and the Polizeimeister hastened to withdraw behind the backs of his adherents. Then came his command to open the gates.

"Closely surrounded, we filed out one by one into the street and, forming a narrow column, solemnly started. The picture was somewhat remarkable: our column moved forwards closely surrounded on all sides by three thick rows of 'the force.' Municipal police, each armed with a revolver and sabre; foot-soldiers, unarmed, probably for the purpose of giving them a chance of using their fists; and mounted gendarmes, clattering along in their smart uniforms and accoutrements.

"In accordance with our resolution we walked silently and orderly. In the faces of the public that filled all the windows in the mansions on our route we saw surprise mingled with appreciation. These were moments of dignity felt by all. But such a mood could not last long. As we turned round the corner of the second long street there was a sudden enthusiastic onslaught by the public upon our ranks. They burst through the triple row of the 'force' and were amongst us—shaking hands, shouting, embracing us breathlessly, with tears shining in their eyes. . . . In another moment a shout of gratitude burst from our side. 'Hurrah!

direct function, it is used for exhibitions and military reviews, and also, in Petersburg and Moscow, by the police when holding up large numbers of people.

Hurrah! Moscow is for us. . . . *Spassibo, Spassibo!* [Thank you.]

"The soldiers and police fought vigorously to divide us, but it was impossible—we were one whole. A student's figure appeared on the top of a street lamp. . . . 'Silence! Listen!' came from all sides, so that even our guards involuntarily stopped fighting in their vain attempts at separation.

"'We address society! . . . Away with the Government of murderers and provocateurs!' . . . resounded the fragments of the improvised speech, ringing crisply through the frosty air. Without waste of time, a big packet of proclamations appeared from the orator's pocket and a shower of leaflets fluttered towards the crowd above the heads of the police, who tried to catch them before they had reached the outstretched arms of the public.

"Then we noticed that the gendarmes were pulling the nagaiki from their belts. 'Enough, comrades, enough! Come along to the Manège'—and without the slightest effort on the part of the guards we renewed our march, the numbers of the public surrounding our escort growing as we proceeded.

"Presently we reached the immense building, already guarded by foot-Cossacks and both kinds of the police. Squeezed into one line we filed through a small opening in the large gates into the building. Great was our surprise at being greeted by the Marseillaise! It appeared that a group of the public had been expecting us round the Manège and had been consequently

driven inside for punishment. But we had occasion to observe that new crowds of people were steadily gathering round the building to watch us go in.

"Inside the Manège, besides the group of the public, there were a detachment of mounted cossacks and one of dragoons. Of course the natural thing to do first, as far as we were concerned, was to break into appropriate singing. The sound of a clear, powerful tenor came from a tall fellow in a scarlet shirt under his toujourka, voicing the general feelings and leading the revolutionary and sarcastic "*Nagaiechka*" [a song that came into existence after February 8, 1899. *Nagaiechka* is a humorous diminutive for *nagaika*]. The chorus followed on like one man, and was in its turn followed by the arrival of more soldiers who walked in and halted, piling their arms. We also settled down in the best way we could; a few of us had secured a bundle of straw or a plank, left behind after a recent bird-show, and offered them to our women comrades. In singing and talking the rest of the afternoon passed away.

"Meanwhile it grew dark; fatigue and hunger gripped us. The electric light was switched on—and the bareness of the place callously outlined. No food was offered to us, only a huge camp-boiler was at last brought in and a few handfuls of tea flung into it; from somewhere appeared a bag of sugar and about thirty mugs or so, while we numbered nearly a thousand. We did not all participate in this luxurious drink, but the sight of it lifted our spirits wonderfully; jokes, laughter, and songs echoed from the beams of the high roof.

Some one managed to break a little corner in the high window, and intercourse between us and the crowd outside was established. . . . The news was grand: 'Moscow will back the students up!' Perhaps it was too good to be true, but it was good to hear it, all the same. . . .

"Presently we requested a talk with the gendarme officer and politely asked him for food. He said, 'Dinner in an hour's time,' and hurriedly bowed himself away. Three hours passed without any sign of dinner. Then an immense laundry basket was brought in, filled with bread, sausages, cakes, cheese, &c., a collective message from the public outside! We met it with open arms.

"At eleven P.M. there appeared at last a commission from the Okhrana,* who made a list of our names and addresses, which we gave honestly. There were over a hundred women among us—*coursistki*, and such sisters, wives, and friends as had joined us on our march. After enlisting, we were informed that these women would be taken to their homes, each in the charge of two policemen. This was most objectionable. They had never struggled and would not think of doing so if released; † so we demanded that the Head of the Moscow Police, General Trepoff, should come forward and explain matters. Instead of him, after an hour and a half of

* See beginning of chap. ix.

† Russian women do not attempt to resist the police by physical force. When they are arrested they go quietly; any fighting, as well as hilarity amongst the crowd, on these occasions, is unimaginable in Russia.

waiting, appeared one of our professors—confused, and almost lost in his *shuba* [fur coat]—and timidly opened negotiations with Trepoff by telephone. At last the women were allowed to go home without escort, but many of them remained with us of their own accord.

"Meanwhile the morning came—and with it more hampers from the public, brought in by shop-boys. The latter immediately entered into the spirit of the thing and delightedly smuggled through notes from us to the public outside. But no food from the authorities —only a promise of a 'dinner at four.' . . . This, after having driven us in on the afternoon of the previous day! But four o'clock came—and no dinner. Then we demanded the presence of the Procurator of the Courts of Justice, as we were being treated in an absolutely illegal manner. The Polizeimeister declared that he had no right to trouble the Procurator. We would not listen to that.

"'Procurator! Procurator! Either dinner—or Procurator!'

"Amusing as it sounds now, it was not then: the Polizeimeister tried to hide himself behind the soldiers; we pressed on, not to lose sight of him—and in another moment the soldiers, without any command, began beating us with the butt ends of their rifles. Still another—and we saw the bayonets rising in the air. . . . Exhausted nerves could not bear it quietly, there arose cries and groans, several people fainted. The absurdity of the situation was too grotesque. Some officer stopped the extra zeal of his men—the Polizeimeister

fled—and presently the Procurator appeared, accompanied by two assistants. He promised to consider our demands and to see to those who by this time had been taken ill.

"But the promise remained a promise. No dinner. Cold earth under us, cold, high roof above us, strength failing us, gloomy soldiers surrounding us, and, above all, the bitterness of our wounded feelings asserting itself. . . . To say nothing of the integral cause of it all. Meanwhile, as we learned later, the crowds of sympathetic bystanders never diminished round the Manège; what is more, food, blankets, pillows had been brought for us in quantities—but nothing reached us: the smuggling in the morning must have created a fear of 'dangerous intercourse.'

"The first thing which at last was done for us consisted of ambulances sent for the sick. Their appearance naturally created a great excitement outside: the impression gathered by the crowd was 'The students have been beaten!' . . . When those who were really overcome and fainting were carried out we heard a roar of indignation rise beyond the thick walls.

"Meanwhile the second evening came—with its cold electric light high above under the beams. Again and again we tried to sing—but the beloved songs sounded queer and the voices cracked. Then came the news that in the middle of the night we should be taken to Butyrka [a shortened name of a large prison in Moscow where people are kept before being sent to Siberia]. It was decided immediately not to protest against the

TYPES OF RUSSIAN WORKMEN.

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strange time fixed for it—we had no more physical strength left for protests. And then, at two in the morning, the 'dinner' appeared! . . . Earthenware bowls, wooden spoons,* bits of rough linen for table-cloths, and a huge boiler full of hot *shchi* [salt cabbage soup] steaming away. . . . There was great excitement, and much laughter. But we found that hunger had killed appetite, and most of us simply forced ourselves to eat.

"'You may form your own groups to be taken to prison,' came a polite order from the authorities after this meal.

"At last, at past two, we were in the frosty but pure open air. Cossacks with burning torches formed a strong escort and took us a round-about way, by small lanes, which made it nearly a two hours' walk. Notwithstanding the time of the night we were met by many groups of comrades and the general public, who cheered and called out, 'We are yours! We'll back you up!' They tried to get at us, as they did thirty-six hours before, but this time there were not nearly so many of them; all they could do was to surround the cossacks and follow us. But this could not prevent us from singing, and the quaint procession proceeded, sending song after song into the silent air of the early hours. On our route we passed by the University lodgings, where only the well-behaved milksops dwell, and heartily tried to wake them up by the 'Marseillaise.' This was followed by a number of regular revolutionary

* All peasants and workmen eat with wooden spoons in Russia.

songs, to the great horror of our escort; but what can one do to those already arrested and obediently marching to prison? You can't close the mouths of a company of young Russians, whatever else you do to them. . . .

"There we are, at last—in prison. It is warm and dry in the cells. Close, of course, but that we do not mind, as we are only too glad to get a little of the frost out of our limbs. A bag of straw is given to each one on which to sleep; lovely! I remember I slept like a top on one of the benches in the corridor, for the cells could not hold us all.

"The sounds of loud talking and laughter reached my subconsciousness before I opened my eyes in the morning; when I did, I saw our people jostling one another, moving in and out through the open doors of the cells of 'our own flat.' . . . But what was that chilling, jangling sound coming faintly from somewhere? . . . In another moment I realized that the main part of the building containing the *katorjane* [not the political prisoners, but the sentenced criminals, who await their turn to be despatched to the mines in Siberia] must be somewhere close by; Butyrka offers the shelter of her walls to many hundreds of people from all corners of Russia at any moment. I went out to see if there was the possibility of anything like a wash, and also to try and find my friends. In every cell there were companies in high spirits helping themselves to kettles of tea, served on some one's bed; paper bags containing private food were

making their appearance amidst joking and laughing. There were hardly any novices. All had been there before, or in similar places, in 1899. In one of the cells men were busy with strings arranging a 'telegraph' between their window and the one at a right angle to it in an adjoining wing of the building. I looked out and saw faces of young women crowding at it. They were our fellow students—wives and sisters.* In another room means for improving our material condition were being energetically organized: the ten kopecks (2½*d.*) allowed per head per day was not sufficient and we elected a *starosta* to manage the business through the agency of the Governor of the prison. At noon our neighbours, the katorjane, brought us dinner—apparently they were used on these occasions as servants. The dinner consisted of bad kasha and hot water with bits of fat floating in it—called soup. But we were too high-spirited to treat it otherwise than with humour. After dinner there began the usual discussions and debating, previous experiences were told, the possibility of winning our cause was considered. Some one hung out a poster in the corridor—'To-day! Auction: two right-foot goloshes, one half of a cigarette case, a piebald student's cap.' Presently, of course, singing began, but this did not satisfy our artistic demands. A regular concert was arranged for the evening—national and comic songs. Oh, the fun—the sweetness of it! Our bags of straw formed the seats in the first row;

* Numbers of Russian students are married. No one interferes with that side of their lives.

two benches, one on the top of the other, the platform; smoking was strictly prohibited out of respect for the singers' voices. The scanty little lamps from all the rooms were brought into the concert hall.

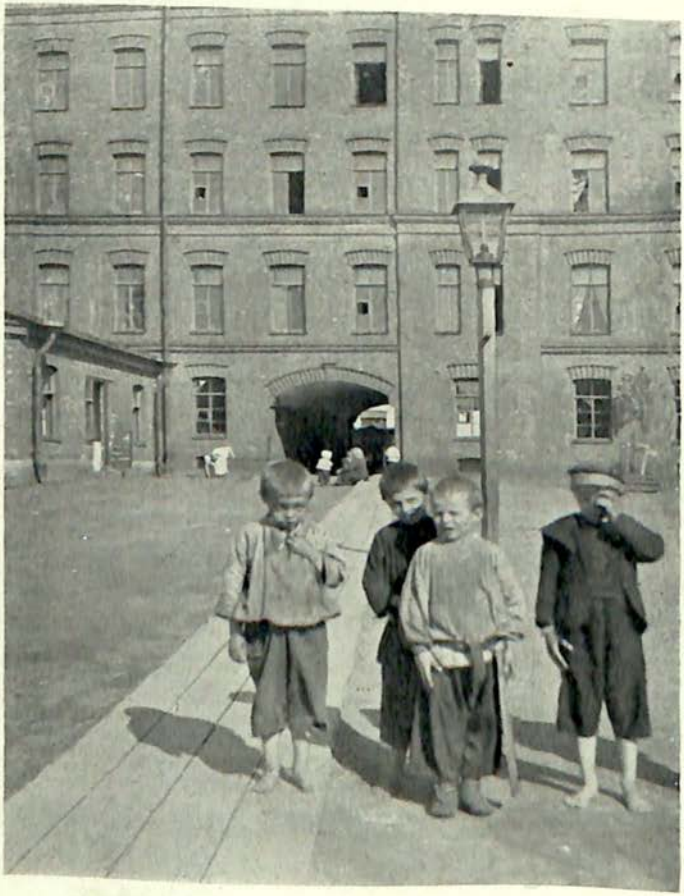
"But here and there one heard talking on more important matters. 'Dash it all! Just finished the first half of my quantitative chemical analysis.' 'Now try a qualitative one—of our soup over here!' . . . 'And I was just waiting for my turn to submit the papers on my work to the professor, but have had no chance.'

"After the concert, general talk veered round to those who had been locked up in solitary cells, and our mood changed. . . . The best, the cleverest of us—over thirty of them as far as we could make out—were now sitting alone in rooms one pace wide and three paces long. We had only the myriads of insects to grumble about—but they? . . . And the katorjane? . . .

"Melancholy was beginning to steal over us, when there came through the thick walls the sounds of a Church chant, which is compulsory after a call-over, and then *Dubinushka.** No need to say that we joined as one man. The officials tried to cover the song with an assortment of strong language, but could not.

"Next morning there was some great news announced; parcels had come to most of the people in our

* One of *the* National songs, no one knows how old, that has gradually grown into a revolutionary one. The singing of it is supposed to be a sufficient proof that one contemplates the overthrow of the existing order of things.



St. Petersburg Factory Children.

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flat. The excitement of it, the joy, the importance! . . . Every article had passed through the hands of the Okhrana—and yet there were tiny little notes rolled up and hidden in sausages, butter, cakes, oranges—telling us all the news of the day and describing Moscow's state of mind. Nearly every one of these messages was read aloud. 'Comrades, your protest has hit the mark! Moscow is all agog with excitement and indignation. There are processions of workmen and of Intelligentzia. Mounted patrols are stationed everywhere. Universities on strike—Petersburg, Kharkov, Kiev have expressed sympathy and are on strike, too. Be brave, hold out! Demand permission for seeing visitors.' But when a whole newspaper was procured from inside a pillow and read aloud from the first line to the last, it appeared that there was literally not one word in it concerning the topic, as it was customary to prohibit publication of such news. Many parcels contained our books of study; now we could set to work—and did so eagerly.

"In the course of the first days of our imprisonment, a young student, whom no one seemed to have known before, attracted every one's attention, and, at first, our sympathy and trust. How he could have got into our midst we did not quite see, but a common delicacy of feeling did not let us dwell on the subject and question him as though we were officials holding an inquiry. After all, in an institution containing eight thousand people one cannot personally know them all. This pale, blond young fellow was the only one who delivered fiery speeches of a purely anarchistic nature, who tried to

attract people, to debate with them, to learn their views. We soon began to wonder whether it was wise on our part to express our opinions, although all of them were of a much more moderate nature than his own. One day he was asked to go to the office and did not return till the next day: then there was no more room left for doubt: the man was a spy from the Okhrana.

"A few more days passed, and we beheld amongst us a brilliantly smart young gendarme officer with the gallant manners of a man of society. He poured forth a flow of 'sympathetic feeling—really . . . privately, of course—perfectly understanding. . . .' &c. We kept silent, waiting; what was he driving at? The chasm between an elegant sea-blue gendarme uniform and a student's toujourka had always been too wide to be bridged by any genuine sympathy. Amidst the silence which greeted him, he announced, in clearer terms than he usually chose, that an offer was being made to us by the Okhrana: namely, that we should give up the most radical men amongst us, and then—the rest of us 'could receive as many daily papers' as we like! Contempt on every one's face was the reply to this offer, and one of us replied for all: 'Sir, we are not spies, we are students. We are not children either to be tempted by a pile of newspapers, and we ask you not to visit us any more.'

"A thunderous noise of mocking laughter, hissing and hooting. 'Away with the gendarme!' now rose like a gale; pale—almost green—trembling and shrink-

ing, the man slunk away, all his aplomb gone. "Away with the gendarmes! Down with you all!' . . . As we shouted these parting blessings, following the man along the corridor, we saw the broad faces of the sentinels at the wide glass doors grinning with appreciation at his discomfiture.

"Presently a friendly intercourse was established between us and our neighbours the katorjane; through those of them who brought us our dinner we learned their wants and wrote for them their complaints and petitions. [It should be remembered that in the census of the nineties 95 per cent. of the population of Russia were stated to be unable to read or write.] A whole judicial commission was immediately formed by our students of law to apply their combined knowledge for the purpose.

"The katorjane occasionally answered us by illiterate scrawls, scribbled on dirty bits of paper, but breathing of that wonderful warmth of heart peculiar to our folk—even those of them who call themselves 'last and lost people.' They also would send their messages to us: 'We are people without any rights or light, but we know that you stand up for truth. . . . Send us books, good, clever books, please.'

"Presently there was a daily paper written by hand for them and smuggled in to them by us through the attendants, and every evening there was the simultaneous singing by the two immense choruses—one of students, the other of murderers and thieves—resounding on either side of the thick wall and uplifting

every thought and feeling. The authorities were afraid to prohibit this, the only outlet for our emotions.

"We also tried to establish some intercourse with those of our comrades who sat in solitary confinement in the furthest wing of the building. But this was very difficult. When out for the twenty minutes' walk in the large yard, pretending to be engrossed in a game of snowballs, we would gradually retreat further and further beyond the prescribed bounds until we could pick up a tiny slip of paper cautiously thrown down through a railed window high above, where a pale face and glowing eyes, exhausted but still vehemently energetic, could be discerned. Sometimes one could distinguish when close to the wall a piercing whisper and try to answer these burning questions whilst appearing hilarious under a shower of snowballs.

"Our imprisonment was nothing compared to theirs. Our katorjane presently managed with superhuman cunning to smuggle through our messages to those solitary prisoners. We never learned how.

"At last, after many weeks of waiting for the moving of the waters, we were told that a commission of professors had arrived at the office of the prison to collect evidence. We were to come in in groups of a score or so. It was instantly decided to explain our positive demand for the abolition of the Temporary Rules, but great was our disappointment when the first group returned from the office.

"'It is disgusting—all the old stuff over again! They are the worst lot of professors—evidently the

decent ones would not come. Nothing but puerile persuasions to behave, not a trace of serious investigation into the matter. They won't listen to a single word of ours. We must not stand this—there is a savour of the Okhrana about it.'

"An awful noise began, but the only way in which we could express our protest was by . . . the dear old singing! So we crowded at the big glass door of our flat and sang *Dubinushka* and Marseillaise. Bitterness, offence, pain, indignation rang through our voices this time. . . . Faces gloomily insistent, the brows knit, the eyes glowering. We sang for half an hour without stopping, singing the innermost bitterness out of our hearts. No one came to fetch us down to the office by force.

"On the next day we gave the ordinary evidence to the police, filling in accurately the usual forms. Soon they began releasing us one by one—mostly to despatch us to our birthplaces. The majority wanted to remain in prison for the purpose of bringing the matter sooner to the longed-for end; but nerves were shattered and vitality too lowered for that.

"It had not, however, been all in vain—something had been achieved. True, our comrades did not return from soldiering, but, after holding out some time to preserve its dignity, the Government stopped sending students to the barracks, although the Temporary Rules were not abolished as formally as they were introduced.

"Then the time came when there were no more 'academists' left amongst us. All naturally became fierce

politicians.' In the course of twelve months the students' movements spread with unheard-of rapidity."

. . . . .

So end the notes of A. Titoff.

On October 15, 1906, the hooligans of Moscow, inspired by the Okhrana and their organ, the "Moscow Viedomosty," actually attacked the students and scholars of all descriptions in the streets of the old capital without a word of warning. The attack was immediately reinforced by cossacks, municipal police, and the Black Hundreds—most of them market tradesmen who call themselves patriots. Gymnasia boys and girls, students and coursistki, all ran to the University, which was instantly turned into a kind of fortress and hospital combined. This criminal move on the part of the Government lasted four days: groups of students in the streets were actually greeted with volleys of bullets without the slightest reason or even pretext on their part.

"Students were seized, tormented, beaten, killed, drowned . . ." writes a witness, Assistant-Professor Koltzoff. "The University gates were guarded from outside by the Black Hundreds and similar heroes, while inside the premises students—men and girls—were bandaging, nursing, and feeding their comrades as best they could. . . . These were days of Moscow's shame and horror. The University presented an unprecedented sight. . . . On the floor of the auditoria lay blood-covered toujourki . . . empty coffins . . . corpses. No one to see to them—those alive and suffering needed

immediate help filling all the auditoria, even corridors. The slaughter ended as abruptly as it began: literally at the stroke of some magic wand. . . ."

When the first Russian Revolutionary upheaval was overpowered, the Universities, exhausted and pessimistic like everything else that dreamt of freedom in the land, quieted down. The lull continued until 1910, when Tolstoi's death on November 7 came as the signal for a new awakening. Tolstoi was loved by all, except reactionaries, for many various reasons. A feeling of great emptiness was caused by his death; before, there was always the consolation that if one found oneself morally bankrupt there was the heart of this genius to go to for help. He was always there—to listen and succour.

On the very morning of November 7 there were workmen's strikes in all big towns, taking the form of singing the beautiful though heartrending chant, "Eternal Memory." The students and Intelligentzia assembled in Petersburg University with the same feelings, and—on coming out into the street still singing that chant—were overtaken by a detachment of mounted gendarmes, who instantly rode into the crowd and began slashing everybody with the flat of their swords. Naturally enough the meeting on the next day began by singing the Marseillaise instead of the "Eternal Memory," whilst the gendarmes were backed up by the municipal police, who this time were equipped with rifles besides their usual revolvers and sabres.

I happen to know a young student, a slightly built

boy, who was snatched on that day out of the crowd and ferociously beaten by six policemen, who used their fists as long as their breath lasted. In his exaltation he did not feel any pain; when his assailants had finished, and he looked up in surprise, one of the policemen spontaneously offered him a cigarette, saying, "You see, sir, we are told not to be lenient."

On November 12 crowds of students, Intelligentzia, and workmen assembled in the square of the Kazan Cathedral, although the traffic across all bridges leading from the University side of the river had been blocked. All banners bore the inscription: "Away with capital punishment"—the idea that breathed of Tolstoi's great spirit. The only tune sung on that occasion was the "Eternal Memory"; but troops of all descriptions concealed in the yards of the adjoining mansions appeared, and the usual means were applied. The resolution was to continue the Universities' strike until the summer.

Banishments began, this time on a new line: the searching of private lodgings was found to be no longer necessary, and the students were taken straight away from the University buildings and from the streets to prison. The tumult continued throughout January and February, against the desire of the minority, who were ready to agree to anything for the sake of peace. Amongst the majority many when leaving home each morning would say good-bye for an indefinite time to their people; and it was well they did so, for many have never returned.

I have been told many details by one who took an

active part in this last fight "for principle" in the winter 1910–11. First 500, then 900, students were arrested in the early spring, and imprisoned, first in Petersburg and then sent across the country *po etapu*. At each halting-place the sympathy of the population was shown by the numerous presents of flowers and eatables which were sent to the prisons. Much was learned in the course of the few weeks of this travelling. Some of the escort treated the students like cattle; but in other places the whole escort, as one man, would throw into the corner of the large but dirty railway carriages all their weapons immediately the station was left behind. They would join in the talk and revolutionary songs. They said this suited them much better than treating their prisoners according to orders; and it appeared that this new treatment had been practised on some routes for several years.

But the part of the Universities proper in the history of the liberation movement was coming to an unexpected end. In 1911 a body of professors simultaneously left Moscow University as a protest against the measures of the Government; they were immediately replaced by favourites and nonentities from the opposite camp. The University became colourless, placid, filled almost entirely by young fellows of that new type which came as a sequence of the demoralizing times of reaction. In Petersburg the University has been "cleverly" toned down by the Minister of Education. It sounds absurd, but M. Kasso has contrived to bring the autonomy granted to the Universities in

1906 to nothing! When the University Council elects a Professor or a Rector, he is deliberately sent without delay to some far-away provincial University, and his influence is thus ruined. Such was the recent case with the Rector himself, who had been at the same time a member of the State Council of the Empire. The students' meetings are supposed to be allowed, but the subjects for discussion must be submitted to the Inspector beforehand, and, if not satisfactory, the meeting is attended by gendarmes as well. Such means have robbed the autonomy of all its meaning. Neither the "politicians'" nor the "academists'" party appears to have been right in their prognostications. Besides, the examinations are made much easier, both on entering and on leaving the University. This attracts those far below the previous standard, and is simply introduced to fill the ranks of the Civil Service with obedient servants who are not given to thinking too much.

The striking difference in the new atmosphere of the Studentchestvo, as compared to the old one, can be clearly seen from the following facts. Even those who believed in free thought and have suffered for it now have not sufficient nerve to fight against the demoralizing torpor. Amongst the professors there are none to stand up for the old principles. All the best men who were not dismissed by the Minister of Education left the universities of their own accord. All that the students dare to do is to pass occasionally some modest resolution at an impromptu meeting which lasts about two minutes.

The only days when the old memories are openly revived—usually by a one-day strike—are the following: January 9 (Red Sunday), the Zarentui Day—in memory of the case when all the Intelligentzia were indignant because a political prisoner was slashed to death in the Siberian mines at Zarentui; Sasonov's Day (assassination of the Minister of the Interior, Plehve, in 1904), Vetrova's Day (the death of the student girl in the fortress, mentioned before); and Iglitzki's Day. The last one needs explanation, and brings us to a most unexpected extreme.

The "academists'" party in the old days, as will be remembered, was the one which principally kept to its studies and for years demanded only academic freedom, whilst the "politicians'" party struggled for the freedom of the whole nation. The "politicians" have been discouraged by the system which can be best described by the national expression, "drawing one's soul out bit by bit"—whilst the demoralization of the "academists" went much further. Wearing smart uniforms lined with white silk is no longer sufficient for these people, as it was once; at the present time they not only do not work, but have brought into the universities an atmosphere which would have been perfectly impossible before. They have formed their own corps *à l'Allemagne*, the members of which drink and try to imitate in every way the brusque manners of the old German student. The best of them are solely engrossed in sport. But the worst of it is that they include in their numbers people belonging to the "True Russian

People's Union." * They have their own branch of it! . . .

After this, the finishing touch in the system of the demoralization will hardly come as a surprise: the "academists" now wear revolvers which are secretly given to them by the Police Department!

Here are two facts which illustrate this appalling innovation.

In the spring of 1912 there was one more effort made, this time at the Odessa University, to demand the return of popular professors and of all students to their universities. The meeting, though prohibited, took place in one of the auditoria. The "politicians" occupied the lower part of the amphitheatre, not only in order to be nearer the speakers, but also because on their arrival they found the upper benches already occupied by the "academists." Right in the midst of the speeches firing began—bullets coming from the "academists"! From their superior position, these students were firing at their comrades of the same university—deliberately shooting at the defenceless men below. This lasted for about two minutes. One student, Iglitzki, was fatally wounded and died in a few hours. The "academists" never heard as much as one word of reprimand from the authorities.

It is this day of which the first anniversary was kept in all universities last spring by chanting "Eternal Memory" in place of working. It is a relief to say that

* See chap. iv.

the "academists" and the "True Russian Students' Union" together comprise only 300 members out of nearly ten thousand at Petersburg University; after all, over nine thousand believe in the old traditions even though not actively supporting them.

There was another somewhat similar case, still more recent. An "academist" shot point-blank at a non-academist as the man opened the door of a room where a few "academists" were assembled discussing something. This time the wounded man escaped death by mere chance; but the "academist" also remains until now safe and sound amongst the numbers of those who proudly call themselves "defenders of Faith, Tsar, and Fatherland."

The result is that the Ministry of Education is avoided by every one who seriously wants to teach or to study. The professors who have left this realm of nonentities now give their talents, time, and strength to private schools, which are springing up like mushrooms under the ægis of the Ministry of Trade (as mentioned in chaps. i and vi); or work at the splendid Shaniavsky's University in Moscow. Initiative is abundant in Russia, and when the young spirit is forcibly suppressed in one place it will find its way through in others. Shaniavsky's University, the People's University for Workmen, the Commercial Gymnasia, and small private schools, for girls alone or mixed—these will supply the next generation with the necessary impetus.

The other High Schools are living through a change

* See chap. vi, pp. 170-1.

somewhat similar, although less striking, because it was chiefly the spacious university world that had been for some forty years the vanguard of the Intelligentzia.

In spite of the length to which this chapter has already reached, the recent events in the Medical Academy of Petersburg must not be omitted.

This centre of higher education exists as an institution parallel to the university, because the latter in Petersburg does not comprise a medical faculty. Usually some of the professors of that Academy have been doctors in the army, but the others were civil. There has always existed a uniform of a semi-military character, including special epaulettes and short side-arms—but there the likeness to a military institution ended. The students had no military rank. They were not obliged to become army doctors nor to salute the army officers in the streets. Both this institution and the High Medical Courses for Women have always had the reputation of being highly intellectual centres, very keen on work, and very responsive to the call of social problems.

In the spring of 1913 there suddenly came an Ukaz: the Medical Academy was to be turned into a regular military institution. The students of the first year were to be in the rank of privates, while the older ones would have the rights of volunteers; all would have to become military doctors in the army and navy; the programme of the courses was to be considerably curtailed; the students would be henceforth obliged to salute every officer and wear sabres.

This news was met with the greatest indignation.

The time was just before the yearly examinations, and the Ukaż actually required students to change suddenly all their principles, which would make all the difference to their careers. On the morning of its announcement, the epaulettes were unanimously torn off coats and overcoats, and delegates sent to the Director to let him know that if the new Ukaz was not withdrawn the students of the Academy would find it impossible to continue their work.

The unheard-of manœuvre of throwing away the epaulettes seemed to have given the authorities a frightful shock; a conference was called immediately. Whilst it lasted in the big hall of the Academy, thousands of students in their epauletteless toujourki, very often looking demure enough even when adorned with the military symbol, waited outside. It was a bright spring morning, and all the window-sills, steps, and porches of the Academy were littered with young men awaiting their fate. The rumour of the Ukaz spread through the town immediately, and medical girl-students as well as the public were steadily joining the students' crowd. Grave discussions never stopped for a moment. What was to be done? The most perplexed were those who had to go in for their finals in a month's time. Should they give them up?

The decision of the Academy Council ran thus: The new Ukaz was to remain in full force. Henceforth the lectures would not be compulsory, but in the autumn all those who desired to pass the final examinations would be allowed to do so.

The Academy was closed. The stipends which are given in Russia, not as scholarships but exclusively to help the poor students, were withdrawn. They are not much—under thirty-four shillings monthly; but when the cheapest lodgings cost twenty-four shillings a month, even these stipends mean a great deal. To submit and then obediently to come in the autumn and to go through the final examinations meant playing the traitor to one's comrades, one's principles, to the traditions of the Academy! Yet, what was one to do? . . .

It was with downcast looks and heavy hearts that the epauletteless crowd of young men dispersed after the unexpected meeting, which had lasted the whole day. Immediately the professors and students of the Women's Medical Academy held a consultation and the gates of the latter were thrown open to the outcasts. It should be explained that the lectures in medicine at that Academy are not only equal to but often more advanced than those at the Academy for men; therefore the students of the latter were only too pleased with this excellent chance to continue their studies for the time being, thanks to the offered hospitality. But no permission for it was granted.

Now tragedies began—above everything else the natural conflicts between fathers and sons. Some of the young men gave in for the sake of bread and tea; others held out as long as it was possible. But one shot himself, unable to ignore his deep convictions in order to please his parents. More than one thousand people were present at his funeral. There were no red

flags, no demonstrations. But one of the numberless wreaths had a tiny little red ribbon lurking between the flowers—without any inscription on it. The gendarme officers tossed the wreaths about until they found the incriminating symbol; then one of them took a pair of scissors out of his pocket and immediately cut it off.

Many tragic things happened through compulsory saluting. The following scenes are taken from real life, and hundreds of them could be related.

A Medical Academy student, deprived of his stipend, was moving to even cheaper lodgings; his arms were full, for he was carrying all his belongings—an old small bag, a lamp, a bundle of books and papers, and a paper bag with a loaf and a German sausage. An officer coming from the opposite direction stopped him.

"Why don't you salute me?"

"Because I am not a soldier and not even a student at the present moment."

Bang came a blow on his cheek. The officer jumped into a car and was gone.

A general saw a junior officer letting a student pass without saluting him. In another moment he was at the side of his subordinate: "Sir, you are arrested for not obeying the law. Kindly betake yourself to the guardroom."

Another officer stopped a student at a moment when he was entering a motor-'bus. There was no time to discuss the matter as the 'bus started. The officer followed in his private carriage until he saw the student

step out from the bus on to the kerb. In another moment he was beside him. "Will you salute me?"

"No. I am not a soldier and have no epaulettes."

A blow from the officer's sabre was the answer to this, and the student was taken to the hospital with his skull split. Had he revived he would have been court-martialled.

The last term at the Academy saw many students missing. One part of those who remained did so because they saw no good in struggling, and submitted to the hateful change. But some found the military epaulettes and sabres rather chic and seem now to enjoy them. Next summer the first camp is to take place. The great savant and beloved professor in psychiatry has left, and it has been made known that the examination papers in the spring are to be treated particularly leniently. The serious students are shocked and deeply grieved. Numbers of them have left and gone to Curland, to the Derpt University. The old home of sound work, noble principles, and intellectual interests is falling to pieces.

. . . . .

The main part of this historical sketch contains instances of the fine independence of mind and responsiveness of the Russian Studentchestvo, and a description of the place in social life which they held amongst Russian society for over forty years; but quite unavoidably I had to conclude with a picture of degradation. Yet I hope my readers will be able to realize that it is not the Studentchestvo itself which is to blame! Even their

spirit of self-sacrifice, their exuberance, and their idealism would naturally fail after so much vain struggling. It is but humane to forgive them. Secondly, and in particular, it is only the *old shells* that are falling to pieces.

True, the old leader, Moscow University, is brought to nothing, even as a purely educational place (many subjects have no students at all, and all physical laboratories are closed); but there are the private Shaniavsky's University and the People's University; the best professors work just as before, only in different places; the gymnasia and cadet corps have lost all their good instructors, but these are hard at work elsewhere, in private schools, lurking under new flags; the dandies, sportsmen, and "academists" seem to be left alone in the universities proper, but any number of men and girl students from various high schools work in all their spare time, unobtrusively, denying themselves the least traces of comfort and rest; at the private schools, at the House of Enlightenment, and in the wildest corners of the Russian land. There they struggle for the life of those who are dying of starvation, whose human features and limbs are unrecognizable, the eyes lost in the swelling of the *tzynga*, the lips white and swollen to the size of a man's arm, and the knees ever bent at a right angle, all teeth fallen out, all blood decayed . . . and the infection thick in the foul air.

This kind of work, as well as teaching hooligans and making human beings of them, is now mainly left to the honest and loving Russian students—and they do it. They do it silently, modestly, mostly without the

slightest help on the part of any acknowledged organizations, often even without funds except those collected by their own comrades. They do it, moreover, looked at askance and hindered by the Red Cross itself.

Fate help them! Much of what is truly evolution is regarded—and suppressed—like revolution in the Country of Extremes.

VIII

THE ASSASSINATION OF ALEXANDER II

In our activity there has also been a time of dreamy, rosy youth.—ANDREI JELIABOV.

ON Sunday, March 1 (14), 1881, after having reviewed the parade in the Manège and having subsequently lunched in the St. Michael's Palace with the Grand Duchess Catherine, Alexander II left for the Winter Palace. His carriage passed along the Michael Square and Engineer Street and then turned to the left, proceeding at full speed along the quiet and almost empty quay of the Catherine Canal. Following close behind there drove in his open sledge Polizeimeister Dvorjitzky, in his turn followed by two more officers of the escort.

At 2.15, when the Emperor's carriage was about fifty yards distance from the corner of Engineer Street, a loud explosion resounded from beneath it. Colonel Dvorjitzky jumped out of his sledge. Seeing some soldiers on the pavement along the railing of the canal getting hold of an unknown man, he hurried to the Emperor and, meeting him coming out of his carriage, reported to him that the criminal had been arrested.

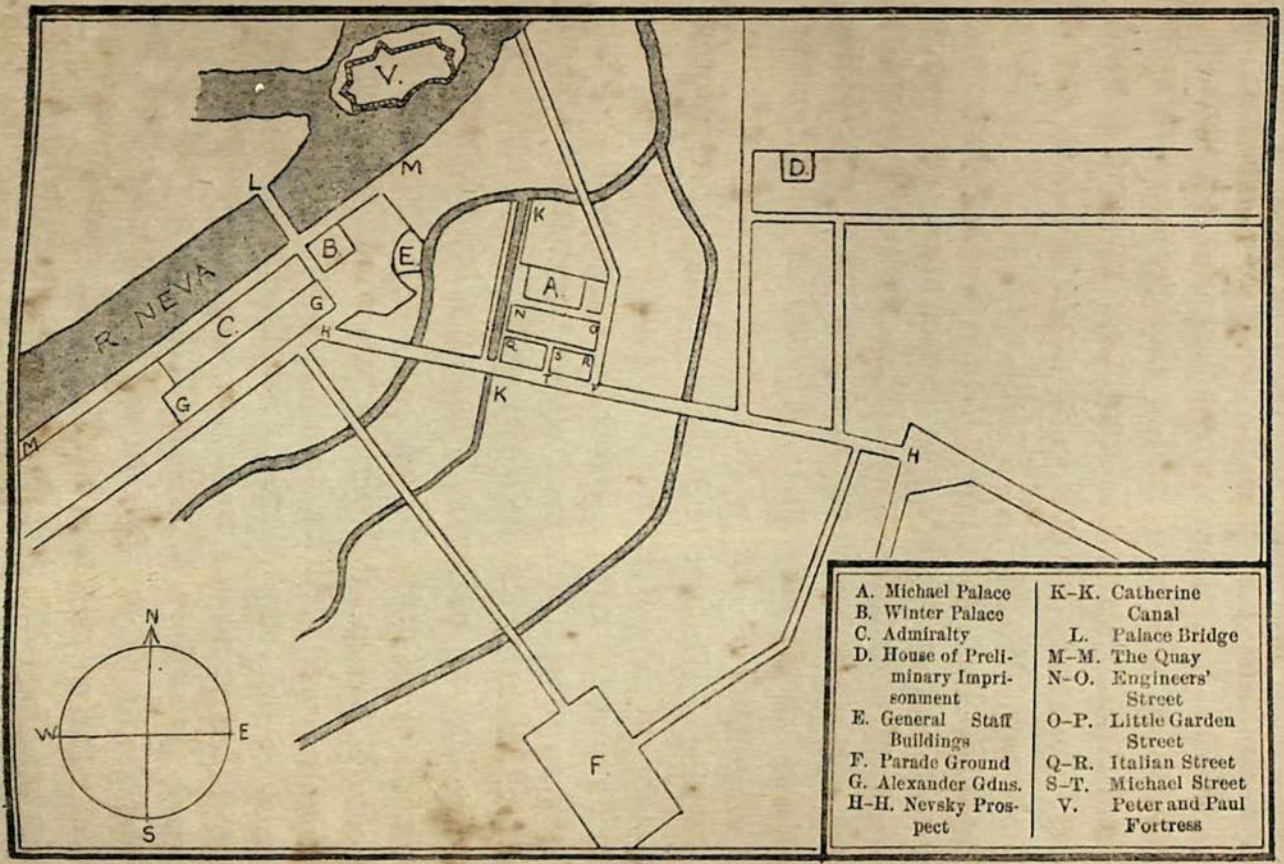
The Tsar walked to the place, where a small crowd had already surrounded a young man. Some officer, without recognizing Alexander, asked: "How is the

Sovereign?"—to which the Tsar replied himself, "Thank God I am safe, but there—" and he pointed at his cossack, who had fallen off the box and lay wounded in the snow, and to a young boy crying with pain. Hearing these words the man who threw the bomb quietly remarked: "We shall see later whether it is 'Thank God.'"

The Emperor asked him whether it was he who had thrown it and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, turned to go back towards his carriage. But he had hardly taken a few strides when there was another deafening explosion at his very feet. A cloud of snow, smoke, and fragments of clothes for a few moments obscured everything. When it had dispersed those present saw the Tsar in a half sitting position, leaning with his back against the railing of the canal, without his overcoat or cap, breathing heavily and covered with blood. His legs, from which all clothing had been torn, were shattered up to his knees. Near by lay the scorched remnants of his coat.

Colonel Dvorjitzky, slightly wounded, rose to his feet, and hearing Alexander's cry for "help," ran up to him. Some one handed a handkerchief. The Emperor lifted it to his face, and, growing unconscious, murmured: "Cold. . . . cold."

The guard of the 8th Naval Detachment and the Grand Duke Michael Nikolaevitch, who hurriedly drove up, carried him into the Polizeimeister's sledge. An officer covered the Emperor's head with his own cap.



PLAN OF THE PALACES AND ENVIRONS, ST. PETERSBURG

"That same night a conference was held between Alexander III, his two eldest brothers, and one trusted adviser in whom the Emperor had the utmost confidence; then, beside the body of his murdered father, he opened the drawer and took out the topmost document. It was the manifesto granting the constitution of which people had talked for so long. He was going to read it, when the friend to whom I have referred approached him, and taking the document from his hands, tore it into a thousand fragments.

"Now, your Majesty," said he, "you can punish me, but at least it cannot be said that you stepped upon the throne of Russia with tied hands."

"Thus began the reign of Alexander III."

This revelation comes as a sequel to a pathetic freak of history. About two months before March 1, the Revolutionary Party of "The Will of the People" had placed before Alexander II a decisive ultimatum, giving him the choice of an end to absolutism or an end to his own life. "Count Paul Vassili," when writing his diary, either did not know of the existence of this ultimatum or did not care to mention it: he may have been unwilling to think that the autocrat of Russia had after all yielded to the demands of revolutionists.

But two and two make four. There had been rumours about it, even in Russia, but of course the fact had never been stated in the newspapers. It appears that Alexander II had at last paid attention to the will of the people when it had been expressed in a voice that would brook no further resistance on his

part. And if he had not put off the publication of his wise choice, he not only would have escaped his tragic end, but the stream of Russian history might have been diverted into different channels from those in which it now flows thanks to the present Duma, under Nicholas II.

As it was: "The will of the Almighty has been accomplished," as the first phrase of the official announcement proclaimed in somewhat peculiar wording.

Twenty persons in all were wounded by the two explosions. The first bomb had been thrown by Nikolai Ryssakov; he walked quietly up the pavement of the canal to meet the Tsar's carriage and threw it, wrapped up in a white handkerchief, under the horses' feet. When arrested, the young man (he was only nineteen) remained quite calm. The second man, the actual assassin of Alexander, was standing against the railing of the quay when the Tsar approached him on his way back to the carriage. When there was not more than two strides between them the young man was seen to lift his arms and to throw something down at the Emperor's feet with all his might. A few minutes after he was picked up unconscious. Taken to the hospital, he regained consciousness only for a moment, just before expiring, and, to the question about his "name and class," answered: "I don't know."

At the trial, and even after it, the Government did not know who this man was, until the revolutionists chose to disclose his name: Ignat Grinevitzky (a Pole).

In the course of the succeeding three weeks the following facts came to light.

There had been in Petersburg three different places, so-called conspiracy lodgings, where several members of the party of the Will of the People who worked on the instructions of its executive committee had met during the preceding two months. The leading spirits of this circle were two persons: Andrei Jeliabov and Sophia Perovskaya. The first was a peasant by birth, one of those types to whose career humble birth presents no obstacle. A clever scholar at a classical gymnasia, then a student at the university in Odessa, Jeliabov always had been a leader—being of a particularly gifted nature, logical and enlightened, as well as possessing a bright, attractive, and powerful personality. At this time he was thirty years of age.

He was arrested two days before the historic event took place; not in any connexion with it—as there was no suspicion that any such attempt was impending. —but for an attempt which he had made in November 1879 to blow up the Imperial train on its way from the Crimea, near a small southern town, Alexandrovsk. After a sixteen-months search by the police he was now arrested, quite by chance, in the lodgings of another prominent revolutionary; his own lodgings were at the time in the 1st Ismailovsky Street, where he was known to live with a woman in a very quiet and modest manner, without servants.

On the day following Jeliabov's arrest, this woman disappeared from the lodgings. She was not seen

again until March 30, when she was arrested in the middle of the Nevsky Prospect: not only on account of her connexion with Jeliabov, but also for an attempt to carry out further north the task which Jeliabov had unsuccessfully attempted near Alexandrovsk, when his mine for some reason missed fire. There had been purposely hired near Moscow a small house situated at the bottom of the slope of the railway line along which the Imperial train had to proceed from the Crimea; there, with the help of other revolutionaries and by means of steady, cautious, and continuous preparations, Perovskaya had arranged a mine which was to be worked from a shed attached to the house. A man fired it at the exact moment when the train was over the prepared mine, at a signal from Perovskaya, who was watching for its approach from the house itself. On that occasion several carriages were wrecked, but no one was hurt.

The woman and her comrades disappeared. But her name and identity were traced: Sophia Perovskaya, *dvorianka* (of noble birth), then aged twenty-five. But she could not be found until after the event of March 1 crowned the attempts of her Party—and even then was not suspected of being an accomplice in the assassination but merely of having been connected with Jeliabov, who, as we shall presently see, had written from prison demanding to be tried as its organizer, though he had not previously been suspected of complicity in this connexion.

About ten days before the event, Jeliabov—to repeat

the old Russian expression used at the trial—*called a call: i.e.* called for volunteers from the Party to undertake the final attempt on Alexander II, which had been then decided upon. Forty-seven people voluntarily answered that call; but Jeliabov selected only four of them: two remained unknown, as their bombs were not needed; the third was Ignat Grinevitzky (then "the unknown man"), whose bomb had killed Alexander and himself, and the fourth was Nikolai Ryssakov, a student of the Mining Institute, "suburban" by birth, nineteen years old, who had thrown the first bomb.

Just about that time all over Russia arrests and sentences of transportation and imprisonment were being carried out by the score,* and it was decided not to postpone the sentence passed by the Party on Alexander. Thus, when Jeliabov did not return home on February 27, the arranging of the details immediately passed into the hands of Sophia Perovskaya; and the date of the assault was fixed for March 1.

At the preliminary inquiry young Ryssakov revealed the address of the conspirators' lodgings, where the final discussions of the last few days had taken place. Accordingly, on the night of March 3, a body of police arrived at the place, rang at the door and demanded to have it opened. A sound of a revolver report came from within, and in a few moments the door was opened by a young woman. This was Gessia Gelfman, who rented this modest little dwelling, where she acted as

* The explanation of this will be found in the next chapter.

landlady and took care of all the important belongings of the place. On the floor of the ante-room there lay a man (later on identified as a revolutionist, Nikolai Sablin) who, foreseeing the results of the arrest, had shot himself dead. Giving herself into the hands of the police, Gessia Gelfman quietly advised the men to be careful in their search, for many things in the lodgings contained explosive compounds—which was true.

The house remained guarded by several police officers, and soon a man was arrested who was supposed to be associated with the occupants of the place and therefore with March 1. He was a peasant, Timothy Mikhailov, who belonged to a revolutionary sub-branch amongst the Petersburg workmen; before the police overpowered him he wounded several of them with a pistol. These two facts he candidly acknowledged during the inquiry and at the trial; but his participation in the assassination of Alexander remained unproved; Ryssakov was the only person who alleged that Timothy Mikhailov took part in testing the explosives two days before the murder, and that he was one of those two men who also were on the quay of the Catherine Canal waiting with bombs in their hands, in case they were wanted. The rest of the accused eagerly absolved him of any share in the plot. Nevertheless, he was tried together with them and shared their fate.

On March 17 the last of those who had been identified as belonging to the group was arrested, also in Petersburg: Nikolai Kibaltchitch, son of a priest, a mechanical engineer by vocation and by education. He was a

man of twenty-eight, formerly a student of the Institute of Civil Engineers and of the Medical Academy. Having been arrested in 1875 for reading, storing, and spreading the literature of socialistic doctrines, he became still more enthusiastic about the latter in the course of his three years of imprisonment. Yet, when released, he did not participate in the terroristic work of the Will of the People Party till 1879; then, seeing the acute form which its war against the Government had taken, he offered them his assistance as a scientist, for his principles commanded him to take an active part in the movement which he shared in theory.

After becoming acquainted with Jeliabov and attending the revolutionary congress in Lipetzk, Kibaltchitch devoted himself to studying the preparation and the qualities of explosives, as he foresaw that these would be needed. He studied everything that could be found on the subject in German, French, and English, and devoted himself to experimenting with and preparing explosives and mechanical apparatus. The name by which he was known to the majority of his comrades was "the mechanician." He did not interfere with any other details of the plots or other people's duties, but kept strictly to his own part. It was he who prepared the explosives for the mines near Odessa, Alexandrovsk, and Moscow.

In connexion with the plot for March 1, Kibaltchitch prepared in the course of the preceding night four bombs in the shape of hand grenades, and also contributed calculations and other necessary theoretical advice to

the organization of the other half of the plot for that day—to which our narrative has now come.

In December of that same winter a man and a woman came to view some premises for a shop and lodgings that were to be let in Little Garden Street, in close proximity to Michael's Palace, on the way between the latter place and the Nevsky Prospect. They said they were cheesemongers; the place pleased them, they took it by the month, and presently opened their business under the name of Kobozeff, man and wife.

Almost from the beginning of their lease and business they attracted the ever-wakeful attention of the dvorniki of the house and also of the policemen usually stationed at the crossing of Little Garden Street and the Nevsky: the trade in the cheesemongers' shop did not seem to be at all brisk, yet the owners never complained and seemed quite satisfied and comfortable; there was something amateurish about them, something "genteel," and their visitors had about them a subtle something which the Russian police scented as "suspicious."

On the strength of this scanty evidence an inspection of the place was made on February 28 (the day of Jeliabov's arrest, although no one had any notion of the coming event); it was carried out by the police and a sanitary official—on the pretext of investigating the cause of the damp on the ground floor of the adjoining house. But this investigation did not reveal anything particular; only the wooden panelling, which the Kobozeffs—as they explained—had themselves put up against the walls to protect the premises from damp,

awakened some suspicions. But there the matter ended. It was only four days later, when the inner meaning of the cheese business came to light, that the police officers who carried out the "sanitary" inspection came to remember that Kobozeff looked rather pale when showing them round his place.

The whole part which this place had played in the plot of March 1 might have remained undiscovered had not the so-called Kobozeff and his wife two days after Alexander's assassination chosen to leave their business quietly and not return. Their long absence renewed the suspicions of the police—which, of course, were at their highest just then—and on March 4 the deserted premises were thoroughly overhauled by engineering experts, police, soldiers, and investigating officials.

The revelations were as follows: A few cheeses and tickets on the counter were all that implied a cheesemonger's business. The real occupation of the proprietor was found to have been much less simple, and suggested the complicity, activity, and resourcefulness of several persons. The cheese-barrels were full of earth, and so were nine large wooden cheese-boxes; nine damp sacks indicated that this earth had been carried in them. Then the wooden panelling was wrenched from the walls: behind it, under the window facing the street below the ground level, there appeared a break through the front wall; various tools for noiselessly wrenching out the stones and for mining work lay on the ground. A low tunnel, triangular in section,

passed under the pavement and ended right under the middle of the street. The two slopes of this tunnel were panelled with boards. In the tunnel there stood a jar with bichromate of potash for charging a battery, the four elements of which were lying close by in a basket. Wires connected the battery with a charge of black dynamite (about 80 lb.), a capsule with fulminating mercury and a square of pyroxiline soaked in nitro-glycerine. Everything was found ready for producing an explosion—the only thing required was the joining of the ends of the wires.

Just two days before this discovery a letter was sent by Jeliabov from his prison. Having been arrested, as mentioned above, for his unsuccessful attempt to blow up the Imperial train in 1879, Jeliabov now, on hearing about the accomplishment of the plot since his arrest, demanded to be tried together with Ryssakov.*

The letter ran:

"If the new sovereign, on receiving the sceptre from the hands of the Revolution, means to continue the old system, if Ryssakov is going to be executed, it would be a crying injustice to grant life to me, who several times attempted an assault on the life of Alexander II, and only through a trifling accident did not personally take part in his assassination. I am very much afraid that the Government will place the outward forms of law above essential justice, and will adorn the crown of the new monarch with the corpse of a young hero only—

* As will be remembered, it was only Ryssakov who had been arrested by that time (March 2).

because there may be lack of proof against me, an old revolutionary. I protest against such an end with all my heart, and I demand justice for myself. One scaffold instead of two would mean cowardice on the part of the Government."

The following events showed that Jeliabov need have had no fear; he was one of the five people that hung from one scaffold on April 3.

Thus, with Jeliabov's own declaration in hand, and with the discovery of the deserted mine under Little Garden Street, the preliminary court of inquiry sat to find the connexion between the two. This revealed itself in the circumstance that in Jeliabov's lodgings, now deserted by the woman with whom he had lived, a few rounds of cheeses were found of a brand identical with that which was sold by the Kobozeffs. Besides, when Gessia Gelfman's centre of conspiracy was searched, besides all sorts of chemicals, parts of apparatus and the literature of the Revolutionary Parties, there had been found a rough pencilled sketch, representing a part of the plan of St. Petersburg, showing Michael's Palace, Engineer Street, Catherine Canal, and Little Garden Street. On the Catherine Canal there were small marks corresponding approximately to the place where the assassination was accomplished, and in the middle of the line which stood for Little Garden Street there was drawn a distinct small circle.

. . . . .

The trial was conducted by "The Special Committee of the Senate for Cases of State Offences." There was

no jury, but the Court was open to the public, and the accused had counsel; Jeliabov alone declined to have one and conducted his own defence. The prosecution repeatedly and emphatically represented the accused as common assassins who were shielding themselves behind some non-existing revolutionary party and its executive committee. Yet the unexpected result created by the tone of their speeches was a greatly increased interest of the public at large in the Party and its views. Without condoning the fact of the assassination itself, popular feeling nevertheless expressed sympathy with the personalities of the conspirators, especially of Sophia Perovskaya, Jeliabov, and Kibaltchitch. In the general attitude towards Ryssakov there was a tendency to forgiveness—for the deed itself as well as for the spiritless way in which he, alone of all the group, had betrayed some names and addresses. It was a most subtle kind of forgiveness. I don't think I could explain it in English to an English reader! . . . The characteristic fact is that an accused, a condemned man, a prisoner, has been, since time immemorial, a creature who inspires only forgiveness and compassion in a Russian heart. A typical example of this is that a band of chained criminals—robbers, murderers, and what not—as soon as they are chained, imprisoned, and led to Siberia, are called in popular parlance, "the unfortunate ones"; and what is more, not only *nestchastnyie*, as the literal translation of these English words would run, but *nestchastnyienkie*, the extra syllable making a world of difference: it adds a touch of affec-

tion to the pity expressed. Every child in the villages on the long roads to Siberia is taught to run out from the hut and say a blessing and give a copper when a gang of convicts with shaven heads is passing through the village, with heavy step and clanking irons.

In the case of March 1 there was no feeling of *that* sort called forth by Jeliabov, Kibaltchitch, and Perovskaya! They were too independent, too dignified in manners and speech, too intellectual, too firm and free in their principles to arouse any feeling of forgiveness springing from an involuntary and instinctive pity for suffering humanity. They commanded respect. But the Russian people's unconquerable desire to forgive found ample scope in its attitude towards young Ryssakov: they forgave him his weakness in stating that the peasant Timothy Michailov had taken part in the plot—an allegation which all the others denied; they forgave him giving away the name and address of Gessia Gelfman. . . . But I shall return to the frame of mind of the Russian public of that day at the end of this article.

The six accused, four men and two women, admitted every detail of their previous and recent activity (except, as just mentioned, Michailov's taking part in the last plot). In doing so they added, as far as they were allowed, an explanation of their motives. The trial lasted five days.

Here are some extracts from the final plea of the accused:

"In 1874–75," said Kibaltchitch in his literary and

lucid account, "the main principle among the members of the Will of the People Party was to desert the milieux in which they were educated and to fuse with the working masses. I shared these longings. I would have been until to-day working at raising the intellectual level of the masses, helping them to cultivate their inborn social instincts—but I was prevented from continuing this work by my first imprisonment." (This, it will be remembered, was in consequence of the discovery of a quantity of prohibited socialistic literature in his possession). "If the Government had not applied similarly severe measures to all participators in the movement for culture, no murder of the Emperor would have taken place: one would naturally remain in the midst of the people. For myself I was endeavouring to apply my scientific inclinations to the improvement of the methods and mechanism of agriculture. But the acute strife to which the Will of the People Party was driven by not being able to work for the cause peacefully made me turn my scientific studies and experiments to the sphere of explosives. My part in the terroristic activity was exclusively technical. I prepared the induction coil and the explosives for the mines near Odessa, near Alexandrovsk, and near Moscow, and for the Winter Palace affair *—although the explosion itself in the latter (on February 5,

* On that occasion a revolutionist had been working in the Palace as a carpenter for many weeks preceding the explosion. The attempt failed owing to the chance circumstance that the Emperor at that moment left the room to welcome a foreign prince.

1880) came as a surprise to me; in preparing materials I did not always ask where and when exactly they were to be used. I also prepared four bombs for March 1—I knew all about this plot—two of which had been used. I brought them myself to the conspirators' lodging at nine o'clock in the morning of that day, when Perovskaya was making the sketch of the plan of action and finally allotting their various tasks to those who were to participate in the attempt. Where exactly I prepared these explosives in the course of the night and who was helping me in it I do not wish to say. With regard to the mine under Little Garden Street, my part in it was limited to purely theoretical investigations and advice: for the idea was to inflict as little damage to the street and houses, and their inmates, as was possible. The amount of dynamite applied was a minimum, *i.e.* such that the passers-by would have been at the utmost hurt by lumps of earth and stone only. The windows in the nearest houses on both sides of the street would have been smashed, but nothing and no one in them would have suffered. All the literature on the subject does not record a single instance of an explosion of 80 lbs. of dynamite making a hole larger than twenty feet in diameter at its top. The aim was to explode the mine right under the Emperor's carriage. He and the escort would have perished, of course, but no one else. It would show an amazing desire for bloodshed if we acted simply for bloodshed's sake. Terror in itself has never been our aim."

When Perovskaya's turn came to speak she said:

"I belong to the party of 'The Will of the People' and acted on the instructions of the Executive Committee. The Party does not advocate any administrative reforms of its own, but it hopes that the society and the people will sooner or later adopt its views and carry them out in practice. It was with the purpose of the economic and moral liberation of the people that the members of the Party settled amongst themselves and started their propaganda. It was the succession of oppressive measures that made this activity impossible. Not all members of the Party approved of prosecuting political strife by means of terroristic acts; but it was resolved upon nevertheless on the strength of the general conviction that the late sovereign would otherwise never alter his system of home politics."

Now the reader knows that Alexander did make up his mind to alter it—but who could have been aware of it then, when the document which embodied his decision was still lying locked up in his writing-table till it was destroyed by an over-zealous subject of his successor?

"The accusation about the facts we do not contradict," Perovskaya concluded, "but the accusation of immorality, of cruelty, and of contempt for public opinion I must deny. I can honestly say that no one of those who know the surroundings and conditions of our life and work would accuse us of immorality or cruelty."

A woman who had an intimate knowledge of Perovskaya's personality and activity wrote about her thus:

" Her small, lithe figure seemed to appear everywhere punctual to the moment, without the least sign of fidgetiness. While organizing the most important problems of work she would always appear so bright and simple that a stranger would never have believed her to be one of the chief moving spirits of a great Party. She was one of those whose gifted nature allows them to manage complicated situations as if they were the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and to remain genuinely simple and cheerful at the same time. When other people's safety was at stake, Perovskaya would be most cautious; but when things implied danger for herself alone, she would remain strong and daring, unswerving in courage. She was extraordinarily sociable, not at all pedantic or narrow over her work, and her natural jollity often found vent in peals of infectious laughter. When in the course of her career Perovskaya was sentenced to banishment in the far north of Russia, two gendarmes were appointed to escort her. At one of the little, dead-alive stations, waiting for a train in the middle of the night, both men, sitting on her right and left in the waiting-room, fell asleep. She quietly took off her shoes, and, carrying them in her hands, walked out. Before her escort woke up she had slipped into the first train bound for Petersburg and was off. Great was the surprise of her friends when they beheld her back in a day or two. The police never caught her again till after March 1." *

* It may be added, à propos, that the Russian police, however numerous, rude, and zealous, are not at all clever or astute in their

Perovskaya had finished her education in the "Higher Women's Courses" in Petersburg, and then became a teacher in the country schools. She joined the Party in 1872.

Perovskaya and Ryssakov had been previously watching the time and manner of Alexander II's drives out for a month or two, and his Sunday visits to the Michael's Palace Parade Grounds made them finally fix the date for March 1. As the Emperor would often drive from there to the Winter Palace via Little Garden Street and the Nevsky Prospect, so the mine in the first of these two streets was meant to be the first and foremost factor of the assault. But the throwing of bombs by hand was decided upon in addition, for which, as we have seen before, some fifty people offered their services, that is to say their lives.

Perovskaya brought the first two bombs to the conspirators' lodgings about nine o'clock in the morning, gave them to Ryssakov and Grinevitzky and told them where to stand, ready to throw them in case the mine should fail to work and the Tsar should proceed on his way via Nevsky Prospect. Kibaltchitch soon brought two more bombs, which were given with similar instructions to two other men, whose turn to use them never came, and whose names remain a secret. Perovskaya also went to the expected scene of events and while the Emperor remained at the Michael's Parade Grounds and Palace, watched from the corner of Great

work. That is why they need and value so much the sort of people with whom we shall deal in the next article.

Italian Street and Michael Square. It was decided that in case the Tsar's carriage turned from the Palace to the right and went the way via the Catherine Canal, Perovskaya should give a signal to the men in Michael Street, who carried the explosives, to hurry on to the quay of the canal.

This time, as Fate willed it, Alexander did take the alternative route.* So she turned into Michael Street, took out her pocket handkerchief and blew her nose. Seeing this, Ryssakov and Grinevitzki hastened to the Catherine Canal. Perovskaya herself followed them round the corner of the Nevsky, crossed the bridge of the canal, and walked up the quay on the other side of it. From there she saw what happened and then walked away; so did the two men who had the third and fourth bombs. She herself had none, "because there were not enough of them made in time to go round," as she explained at the trial.

Timothy Mikhailov confessed that he belonged to the terroristic faction which stood for the Petersburg workmen's interests, as he had been a workman himself. He explained that he had had only about three weeks' "learning" in his life, but he had read and distributed various literature of a socialistic and revolutionary nature. He said he would not have become a terrorist even in principle—which he was—if he had not noticed that he had been spied upon long ago, when he was simply participating in the workmen's movement for economic self-organization. "I certainly fired my

* See plan, p. 247.

pistol when they came to arrest me," he ended, "for I did not want to be caught for nothing, but I did not take any part in March 1."

Thus it appears that either four of his comrades for some pre-arranged reason deliberately tried to absolve him from any share in their plot—or the fifth one, Ryssakov, falsely accused him of taking part in it. The latter proposition is more credible. Ryssakov was only nineteen. He declared that he had acted "not as a blind weapon in the hands of others, but with full consciousness and with his whole heart and soul." Nevertheless his frame of mind was somewhat boyish. . . . He "did not approve of terrorism as a means of political strife, but he wished to murder Alexander II, for he thought that this would result in a new regime and finally abolish the need of terror." As a school-boy at the Réale Gymnasia and in the Mining Institute, Ryssakov had been known as a quiet and diligent boy. On the morning of March 1 he got up ready for his deed in a more cheerful, energetic mood than usual.

Jeliabov's answer to one of the first formal questions put before him—"Of what creed are you?"—was:

"I was baptized in the Orthodox creed, but I deny Orthodoxy, although I believe in Christ's teaching; it is a great factor in the moral incentives which affect me. I believe in the truth and justice of this teaching and fully accept the doctrine that 'Faith without work is dead.' Every true Christian should struggle for the rights of the weak and the oppressed and suffer for them if necessary. Such is my faith."

Speaking sixth, Jeliabov did not find it necessary to repeat what his comrades before him had explained about the Party, yet he was constantly interrupted and stopped by the President.

" . . . My occupation was my work for the liberation of the Russian people, and I lived wherever that work required it. This was my only work. I devoted to it many years of my life and my whole strength. . . . I am one of the people and I have worked for the people. . . .

" Ryssakov was quite truthful in saying that he did not know anything about the mine in Little Garden Street; it would be childishness in revolutionary circles to talk about things of this nature to people who are not meant to take part in them. . . . The Executive Committee gave me the leading part in organizing a final attempt on the life of Alexander II, and I had selected different people for carrying out various parts of the plot. I myself worked at digging the tunnel under the Little Garden Street, but neither Ryssakov nor the others who met in Gessia Gelfman's lodgings, had any notion of it.

" We are not anarchists. We are upholders of a State. We admit that a Government is bound to exist as long as there exist social interests. We are not anarchists: we uphold the principles of a Federal State and we definitely advocate certain institutions for that end. . . . Our aim is not solely to make progress by means of a series of political assassinations: occa-

sional terroristic acts form only one item of our programme, which is demanded by Russian life itself.

"If you, my lords, look through the accounts of political trials you will see that the friends of the Russian people did not always act by bomb-throwing: you will see that in our activity there has also been a time of dreamy, rosy youth. It is not our fault that it is gone now. Our peaceful socialistic propaganda—a movement opposed to force and violence, to blood and revolt—has been shattered by imprisonments, transportations, and executions. . . . Such things showed us the unpractical nature of our innocent longings—and from speculative dreamers we turned into upholders of positivism. Words had to be replaced by action . . ."

. . . . .

On March 30 the sitting of the Special Committee of the Senate ended. The six accused were sentenced to "deprivation of all rights and death by hanging." Notwithstanding Ryssakov's being under age, the fact on which his defence was based, he was not absolved from sentence. The court declared that his age could not be taken into consideration, "for even the slightest participation in such a crime should stand in the opinion of the law above all crimes on the face of the earth."

The sentence "regarding the *dvorianka* Sophia Perovskaya" was to be "referred to the consideration of His Majesty." But she never made use of this prerogative. Only Ryssakov and Mikhailov pleaded for mercy—in vain. Gessia Gelfman was found to be

pregnant and her execution was therefore postponed. Thus, on April 3, the sentence was carried out on the four men and Sophia Perovskaya.

. . . . .

By seven o'clock on the morning of that day Petersburg bore a strange appearance. Numerous detachments of police, cossacks, and troops of other kinds strongly lined the route from the House of Preliminary Imprisonment to the Parade Grounds of the Semionovsky Regiment. This vast square also contained several bodies of troops. Along the whole way and in the Parade Grounds, pressing against these walls of military force, there silently swayed a sea of people; the hour of the execution was fixed for nine o'clock on purpose to make it public.

At 7.50 the gates of the prison were opened and the first "carriage of shame" appeared from it. High up on the plain wooden seat were Jeliabov and Ryssakov, with their hands and feet tied to it. They were dressed in rough prisoners' coats of black cloth and similar caps. On the chest of each of them there was suspended a black board with an inscription in white: *Tzareubiytza*—Murderer of the Tsar. Both men were pale; Ryssakov looked dejected.

The second cart contained Kibaltchitch, Sophia Perovskaya, and Mikhailov. They were similarly dressed and had the same boards on their chests. Kibaltchitch and Perovskaya looked more cheerful than the others. As their cart first appeared through the prison gate Mikhailov called out something to the crowds of people,

but at that very instant scores of drums began to beat a tattoo and drowned the sound of his voice. All along the route of the slow procession the drums never stopped for a second; so that Ryssakov's repeated attempts to communicate something to the silent crowds as he bowed right and left were frustrated. One could only guess that he was performing the old national custom of addressing the people before his death with the word *prostitie*, which in this case implies the meaning of "good-bye" and "forgive me" combined. But some of the crowd said that they could catch the words "We have been tortured." It would not have been anything new or exceptional for Russia if they had been.

Following the two carts came three closed carriages containing five Orthodox priests clothed in mourning robes and carrying golden crosses in their hands. These were the five priests who had arrived at the House of Preliminary Imprisonment the night before. Ryssakov received his priest, talked to him a long time, confessed, and received the Sacrament; they saw him reading the Bible and crying on that day. Mikhailov also confessed but declined the Sacrament. Kibaltchitch argued with the priest who came to his cell, declined either confession or Sacrament, and finally asked the man to leave him alone. Jeliabov and Perovskaya declined to hold any communication with the priests. Before going to bed they all of them wrote to their relatives. At six in the morning they were awakened and given tea; after which they were one by one called to the office and dressed as described above.

The hangman put them on the carts and tied their legs and hands to the high benches with leather straps. The snow in the streets had melted and had been partly cleared away—which as the soundless sledges are replaced by droshki on wheels, always brings with it an impression of something new and sharp; and the tall, clumsy vehicles, with their heavy wheels rattling over the cobbled streets, and jolting the condemned prisoners heavily up and down on their seats some fourteen feet above the ground, formed a sight calculated to produce the profoundest gloom. The bright spring sunshine added but another tragic touch to the picture.

The large Semionovsky Parade Ground was still covered with snow, here and there melting into large pools; but it was packed all over with countless, silent crowds of people. Soon after eight the commanders of the troops, grouped on a special platform, were joined by high officials, by the officials of the law courts, by representatives of the embassies and of the Press; amongst others there was Procurator Plehve, who was subsequently (in 1902) blown to pieces by a bomb thrown by Sazonov.

On the black scaffold six feet high and twelve yards square, surrounded by a black railing, there rose opposite the steps leading up to it three pillories, with chains and handcuffs. Two more pillories at the same time formed part of the tall posts at the opposite sides of the scaffold, which were joined at the top with a horizontal bar, and thus formed the gallows for the five condemned.

The sea of people heaved, and a murmur passed through

it like a sigh of the wind, as the carts with the prisoners slowly passed through the vast grounds and approached the gallows. The hangman and his four assistants—criminals in prison caps—climbed up the carts, untied the prisoners, led them up the steps of the gallows, and tied them to the five pillories. Ryssakov and Mikhailov were deadly pale; the others showed great self-possession, especially Perovskaya, who looked attentively at the crowds of people and then at the scaffold with her eyes shining and her cheeks slightly flushed. Jeliabov looked somewhat excited and often glanced at her.

The *gradonatchalnik* (head of the municipal police) informed Plehve that "all was ready for the accomplishment of the last act of earthly justice," and read out the sentence. All present uncovered their heads. Then the drums began to roll again, the drummers standing in two rows and facing the scaffold. The five priests, ushered up by the hangman, approached the condemned, who, all of them, kissed the cross. Jeliabov, Perovskaya, and especially Kibaltchitch remained wonderfully quiet and bright. Jeliabov and Mikhailov approached Perovskaya and parted with her with a kiss. Ryssakov stood motionless, intently watching the procedure as his comrades were dressed in the fatal shrouds.

The hangman took off his national peasant's coat of blue cloth and remained in a scarlet shirt, after which he began with Kibaltchitch. Next came Mikhailov, then Perovskaya and Jeliabov. Ryssakov was last. He shook on his legs as the hangman threw the loop round his neck, and, being placed on the stool, tried to

keep hold of it with his feet, so that the hangman could not instantaneously pull it out from under him. The latter was obliged to give the unfortunate man a strong push before at last his body swung in the air.

The drums ceased. In twenty minutes' time the corpses were taken down, examined by a doctor, placed in five black coffins with wood shavings at the head, and taken away in special carts attended by a strong escort. The hangman with his assistants were taken back to the prison, and the order was given to take down the gallows. Whilst this was being done, the troops dispersed, except one line of cossacks, who prevented the "black people" (common people, *tchern*) and those who had no special tickets from approaching the gallows. . . .

Thus it was only some of the Intellectuals who secured pieces of the ropes with which the execution had been effected. Their motive was mere curiosity, but the "black people" would have given much for such relics, because, according to their belief, "a piece of rope from the neck of a hanged man brings great luck."

. . . . .

The letter from the Executive Committee of the Will of the People Party to Alexander III, which reached him shortly after the assassination of Alexander II, and circulated all over Russia in thousands of copies, clearly showed that there was no room for the least suspicion that the revolutionists acted as common murderers, or as maniacs without a consistent aim or reason. Charles

Marx, amongst others, expressed at that time his opinion in the following words:

"The letter of the Executive Committee to Alexander III is positively beautiful in its political spirit and quiet tone. It proves that amongst the revolutionists there are people with the brains of statesmen."

Two or three days after the assassination, one of the papers at that time in the interests of the Extreme Left wrote:

. . ." What is to be done now? . . . Nearsighted advisers will say: 'Political supervision should be increased, the rights of the citizens should be reduced, people should be transported *en masse*.' But all this had been done already. Every home had been searched, dvorniki had been spying on every house night and day, pickets had been guarding the Palace, the Press had been kept gagged, the zemstvos had been trampled down, hundreds of people had been banished from the universities, and everything had been directed by the unresponsive kantzelaria,* which none of the people's movements can ever reach. It had been like this since 1866. There is no further advance to be made in this direction; the only thing that remains is the closing of all schools, all newspaper offices, all zemstvos, even law courts. . . .

"There is no other way out but to diminish the responsibilities of the Head of the State—and thus to reduce the danger which threatens him on the part of fanatical assassins. Why should the responsibility

* A general expression for Government offices.

for everything that takes place in Russia—for the disillusionments, for the mistakes, for the sharp measures of reaction, for everything, in fact, that is unseemly in Russia—why should the burden of all this lie on the leader of the Russian nation? No, let the executives of his power be responsible. Domestic political measures should be initiated by the representatives of the whole land, and the responsibility should rest with them. . . . Hereafter let the person of the Russian Tsar remain a bright, sympathetic symbol of the national unity and of the power and further progress of Russia."

For this "revolutionary" attitude the paper was fined and received a severe warning.

. . . . .

In the reminiscences of a revolutionary concerning the days preceding March 1 there occurs the following passage:

"I remember one evening at Shelgunov's, in the large flat which he and his family occupied in Petersburg, there were many socialistic writers, officers, men and women students—and two of the prominent Will of the People men who were vainly sought for by the police. . . . This was in February, when some of us knew that, since the ultimatum had been sent to the Tsar, the second alternative had been decided upon as unavoidable. There was plenty of wine drunk that evening, plenty of dancing, and still more discussion of politics: every one believed in the approach of some great change. . . . Zybin, one of the Will of the People men, as lively as quicksilver—after performing a fascinating mazurka

and winding it up with a vigorous trepaka—made a speech on the importance of the moment. . . . When approximately the same company assembled in the same house after the event, on the evening of March 1, the revolutionaries were the only ones who represented a critical, serious element and discussed the distribution of their work in the most important task of the moment: that of influencing the Press."

There are a few interesting pages concerning that time in some other memoirs.

On March 13 Vladimir Soloviov (the prominent publicist, writer, and professor of philosophy) expressed his idea that violence is a sign of weakness and a wrong means, resort to which cannot be justifiable in any circumstances. After that, Petersburg society was keenly awaiting his next utterance, for those days were seething only with one interest: the four men and two women who were being tried for the assassination of Alexander II. At Soloviov's next public lecture, on March 29, the hall was crammed with a public in eager expectation of the words of their beloved professor. No one knew what he would say, but every one felt that whatever it was would ring with the beauty of truth.

"There he comes—tall, thin, still paler than usual," writes a witness. "Strange words! . . . Unattainable outlines of the mysteries of Christianity, mysteries of the other world. . . . But gradually the horizon is reduced to a smaller circle, one feels one can approach

and almost grasp some great meaning which descends from its mystic sphere and concentrates into a concrete idea of real life. . . . Another bold leap—and the orator is amongst us, in the midst of *the* thought which is in every mind. And we hear the clear voice ring through the breathless silence:

"'To-morrow the sentence will be given out. There, behind the thick white walls, a council is being held how to kill the defenceless. . . . But if this actually takes place, if the Russian Tsar, the leader of a Christian nation, tramples the commandment under his feet and actually sends these four men and two women to be executed, if he himself enters the bloody circle—then the Christian Russian people will not find it possible to follow him. The Russian people will turn away from him and will go their own way. . . .'

"At these words I see a figure rise in the first row, the man rudely shaking his fist: 'You ought to be the first to be hanged, you traitor!'

"But another moment—and the platform is surrounded. Shouts of ecstasy, of emotion, of joy and tenderness come in one big wave. . . . Arms and faces are uplifted, stretched towards the speaker. . . . He bends attentively forward, trying to distinguish the thoughts which are flying to him in an avalanche of sound. . . . It is the roar of a wave that has rolled up on to the beach; at last. . . . 'Thou art our leader! We will follow thee! . . .' comes from the throats of the elegant audience in the genuine manner of the Russian people. More emotion finds outlet in the

instinctive national manner, dozens of arms are passionately stretched forth, the orator is closely surrounded —and in another moment we see his inspired, serious, prophetic face high above the level of the crowd: they carry him lovingly . . . and one intense demand bursts from all lips in the word that has been found:

"'Amnystie! Amnystie! Forgiveness! . . .'

"The wide doors of the hall are open, but the exuberant audience will not part with Vladimir Sergeievitch; they carry him round the hall again and again.

"But the moment the oration began to subside, a new unanimous thought rapidly brought it to a hush: what will happen to the professor now? . . .'

"The Minister of Education was present at the lecture; he approached Soloviov and advised him to go immediately to the Minister of the Interior and smooth matters over.

"'I will not go. I don't know him personally,' Vladimir Sergeievitch objected.

"'But this is not a matter of personal acquaintance; if you won't go to him, you will have to go to Kalymsk, or somewhere thereabouts.'

"'Well, one can study philosophy just as well in Kalymsk,' was Soloviov's truly philosophical remark."

On the next day Petersburg was all agog with news from the Law Courts and with the excitement regarding Soloviov's case. But the efforts of several influential statesmen saved him from banishment to Siberia.

Besides, the professor himself was persuaded to write to Alexander III to explain his avowal. Perhaps the fact of his writing helped him: after having explained that the original Christian law demands a super-human greatness on the part of a monarch, Soloviov found it necessary to sign his philosophical treatise as a "true subject who finds happiness in being one." It is likely that this signature was of more significance in the eyes of Alexander III than a beautiful sketch of what a Sovereign could be, as given by the professor of philosophy.

The description of the public enthusiasm at his lecture which has been quoted above may seem to be written in too flowery a language. But the reader is asked to remember that the figurativeness of the Russian tongue is just as spontaneous as the emotional nature of the nation. And one who was amongst the audience could not possibly write about it in a less enthusiastic tone. That nothing in the scene is exaggerated I know from several people who can remember it; from the Russian love of lifting and carrying about a hero of the moment, to the simultaneous perception of "*the* thought which was one in every mind." It has been mentioned before that the assassination of Alexander II produced a curious attitude of public opinion: on the one hand, disapproval of the event itself, on the other, sympathy and compassion, mingled with respect for those who carried it out. Perhaps the general, characteristically national, attitude towards all condemned persons, to which I have also referred,

accounts for it. Had Alexander III made a super-monarchical effort, and pardoned the assassins, it would have aroused a storm of gratitude and enthusiasm.

Tolstoi shared this public opinion entirely: he wrote to Alexander III, and great care was taken that the letter should reach its destination. He implored "the son and the Tsar to perform that superhuman deed of mercy which no king had ever done before, and which was bound to produce an enormous effect on the evolution of humanity." . . . "Myself," Tolstoi wrote to the Tsar, "I feel that I shall become devoted to you like a dog if you will set this example of all-forgiving mercy."

No one has ever learnt what Alexander III thought of this entreaty and advice. The four men and Sophia Perovskaya were hanged. Gessia Gelfman died in prison soon after the birth of her child.

IX

"AGENTS PROVOCATEURS"

THE SCOURGE AND PROBLEM

There are and can be no secrets for History.
POGODIN.

THE French expression which stands for the title of this article is used in Russia, in a Russified form, to denote those people who are in the service of the Political Secret Police, while they are believed by the revolutionists to be in their own ranks. They not only belong to the regular revolutionary societies, but insidiously help them, in various ways, to organize terroristic acts. With the secret sanction of their official employers, they excite and encourage the revolutionary world, themselves instigating terroristic plots: an activity which is known under the name of *provokatzia.*

Russian spies are of two kinds: those who are simply paid agents of the Secret Police; and such revolutionaries as succumb to temptation when, after arrest, they are offered the alternatives of hard labour in Siberia, and freedom "on some trifling conditions"—such as the furnishing of names and addresses of their fellow conspirators. Few can afford to hesitate when such a choice is put before them. But the majority

of the revolutionaries who do give way are for ever after trying to make up for their weakness by working for the revolution as well; their secret remains a nightmare to them, as they are always in mortal fear either of being found out by their comrades, or of being denounced to them by their dissatisfied employers. Mostly, they end by repenting, ready to face any punishment the revolutionists may inflict upon them.

A very striking case of this kind was that of the first prominent provocateur, Degaiev, in the eighties of the last century. He was first arrested in Odessa. Siberia was imminent. The brilliant and all-powerful Chief of Gendarmes in Petersburg, Soudeikin, attracted by the well-educated and clever engineer revolutionist, came to Odessa and personally offered him freedom " in exchange for some whole-hearted work." Degaiev asked for permission to discuss the offer with his wife. Not only was his request granted, but the interview was arranged for them *tête-à-tête* in a comfortable sitting room, with a luxuriously laid table, instead of the usual surroundings of prison-bars and gendarmes. After that a sham escape from the prison was carried out, while Degaiev was concealed in the comfortable home of the local chief of gendarmes, and then was found at large by the rejoicing revolutionists. Degaiev and Soudeikin became intimate; and as a result of this, prominent workers for the revolutionary propaganda found themselves in fortress-prisons for their lifetime. It appears that Soudeikin confided his own somewhat extraordinary plans to his new friend: *he* dreamed of

A REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT

(in his tonjourka)

DEGAIEV, THE "AGENT PROVOCATEUR"

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becoming a dictator of Russia! But this did not compensate for his own or Degaiev's crimes. The Revolutionary Central Committee in Paris required Degaiev to come and confess. He did so. Then the assassination of his patron and friend was requested of him, if he wished to escape execution himself. Degaiev consented. He asked Soudeikin to come and see him in his flat in Petersburg. Cautious man though he was (no one ever knew in which of his numerous lodgings the Chief of Gendarmes was dwelling at a given moment), Soudeikin came. Several men were waiting for him, armed with the iron mallets which are used for breaking up the frozen snow in the streets in the winter. When the deed was done they locked the flat and went out. The porter saluted Degaiev as usual. On the next day he was safe abroad. The sensation in Petersburg was enormous. Soudeikin had been hated. The Central Committee, in Paris, banished Degaiev from the ranks of the party; he was told never to attempt any political or social work. Degaiev concealed himself somewhere in England or America and was never seen again, although 10,000 roubles were promised by the Russian Government as a reward for his capture.

Our principal sources of information about provocateurs of all kinds are the memoirs and formal statements of honest people, some of whom had been devoted comrades of the provocateurs—before the latter had been found out; also confessions of the provocateurs themselves, given when they had been

found out, or forced from them by an intolerable burden of suspicion.

Documents of both kinds have appeared in "The Past," *Byloie*, the chronicle of the Russian freedom movement, which used to be published in Paris and is now being continued in the form of a newspaper "The Future," *Budoushcheie*. Thanks to Vladimir L. Bourtzeff, the editor, who has done so much to throw the searchlight of publicity on this appalling system, we have been able to collect all the material which—boiled down to a thousandth part of its original length—forms the groundwork of this study.

It should be added briefly, that the duties of the Political Secret Police in Russia are carried out by a service divided into two main branches: the Corps of *Gendarmes*, formed on military lines, the officials of which are clad in a conspicuous uniform in striking contrast to their mainly underground methods of work, and the *Okhrana*,* a civil institution which employs, besides hundreds of common spies, dozens of higher officials. Both institutions belong to the Police Department, which is under the Minister of the Interior, *i.e.* it is in fact under the control of the Prime Minister.

Here is a sample of the Okhrana's activity. In 1905 the head of the Warsaw branch of the Okhrana received orders to find out and arrest all present members of the existing revolutionary organizations. He knew of hardly any; so he looked through the lists of all people who had ever been suspected by the

* Literally, a body on guard. See *Glossary*.

Political Secret Police, and selected two hundred and fifty-seven of them at random. They were banished to Siberia, and he continued to distinguish himself as the guardian of the Tsar and fatherland.

The chief officials of the Okhrana, Gendarmerie and Police Department receive big salaries, promotion, and special gratuities for "tracing criminal plots in time," and this is the explanation of the whole system of Provokatzia. A truly criminal system of degradation and ruin—for the sake of paltry ambition. The special gratuities are usually accompanied by a night of "women and champagne" in a *cabinet particulier* at some restaurant, in company with the hero of the occasion, the agent provocateur. Aseff showed himself to be particularly keen on those crowning graces to his exploits; while the Okhrana officers and the gendarmes in plain clothes, who pay the whole cost of these orgies *na kazionnyi schot* (out of the state exchequer), usually pass with the waiters for excellent bon-vivants.

It is rather a remarkable fact that the corps of gendarmes is formally considered to be under the special patronage of St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker! Therefore, on the 6th of May and the 6th of December, the two days devoted to that saint by the Russian Church, gendarmes of all ranks receive from the Government special money gifts.

Incredible as it may seem, every secret agent of the Okhrana, on however low a rung of that particular ladder he stands (some spies receive only two pounds a month), is beyond the power of the ordinary police,

beyond the reach of justice and control. The statements of the *okhranniki* are never doubted, never verified: whenever they choose to point out something or other as "concealing some evil meaning," this is taken for granted. They are always given false passports by the Okhrana itself. This is done to enable them to conceal their identity when wanted. It is the same with the former revolutionists—those who are tempted by the *okhranniki* or the gendarmes into the mean employment of the provocateurs, and who have not enough determination to choose the scaffold in preference to the "work" offered to them. On becoming agents provocateurs these people are also given false passports by the Secret Police. One may well ask, what is the sense in the passport system if the police themselves know how they can get round it—and do get round it to deceive the loyal citizens?

What a grotesque entanglement!

"The Union of true Russian People," mentioned in chap. iv, put as an aim before itself the scattering of the second Duma to the winds. For that end minor provocateurs were employed to bring the Social Democratic Faction represented in the Duma by insidious methods into contact with the revolutionary Fighting Organization. This was accomplished. A "conspiracy against the existing order" was expressly created, developed—and "found out in time." The deputies were banished and the second Duma was vanquished. These facts came to light and were proved by an agent of the Okhrana, who was "agent-ed," as the specific

slang runs, at the age of fourteen, but afterwards found his duties unbearable.

It may be of some interest to outline a few portraits of prominent provocateurs, each of a different type.

The provocateurs' individual natures and their own attitude towards their double activity present such a mixture of artfulness and daring, of heartlessness, and sometimes of strange emotion, that the whole matter will probably become some day a subject for psychiatry. In looking through the following pages, the reader will be left to draw his own conclusions, and the author can neither help nor hinder him. All one can add is, that the appearance of such a grotesque sore, festering on the Russian body politic, as this system of provocateurs, is the most startling among the cruel extremes of the country.

GAPON

Nine years have passed since Father Gapon appeared as the leading figure in the first move of the Russian revolution, on Red Sunday, January 9, 1905. This move took place, not under the shadow of red flags, but under that of church banners, ikons, and imperial portraits. The procession of workmen carrying their petition made its way from the factories of Petersburg to the Winter Palace to the sound of thousands of voices singing the church chant: " Lord, save thy people and all that is thine, grant victory over his enemies to our righteous Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovitch. . . . ."

Genuine and sincere rang the prayer of the "revolutionists" in the clear frosty air; great was the charm, beloved was the personality, of the leader who aroused the latent social spirit of the masses. No bitter feelings were roused against Gapon by the tragic ending of the pilgrimage. For a year to come the crowds of Petersburg workmen regarded him as their innocent fellow sufferer.

Gapon's long hair was cut for him by one of his devoted followers in a place of refuge as soon as the slaughter of the crowd began, and workmen uncovered their heads as they accepted the long tresses as relics. But in fourteen months from that day Gapon's body was found hanging from a peg in an empty summer-house near the capital. The only explanation given of this in the course of the three following years was a letter received by Gapon's solicitor; there is no room here to give its contents in full. But the first and last paragraphs ran as follows:

"The Workmen's Court has found undeniable proofs of the facts given below:

"George Gapon had been in secret communication with the Chief of the Police Department Ratchkovsky, and with the head of the Secret Political Police, Gerassimoff. They have promised him the re-opening of the eleven branches of the Workmen's Union if he will tell them all he knows about the revolution. He has done so.

"G. Gapon received a special commission from Ratchkovsky to seduce a certain revolutionary * into

* Rutenberg.

serving the Political Secret Police. In attempting to carry this out, Gapon said: 'You are offered 25,000 roubles for one small job only, and if you manage four, you will earn 100,000 roubles—which is a pretty sum of money.'

" The Workmen's Court decided: G. Gapon deserves death as a treacherous provocateur who has marred the honour and memory of the ninth of January.

" The sentence has been carried out."

Besides this statement there were other points which made the mystery still more complicated: Gapon's dead body was not found for several weeks, although Gapon was everywhere known to be missing. And the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionists, in reply to the insinuations of the reactionary press, formally declared that it had nothing to do with his death.

The tumult was great. Who killed Gapon—the Government or the revolutionists? How far did this tale about the mysterious " Workmen's Court " represent the truth?

In a sketch like this, all one can do is to give a series of concentrated pictures of Gapon's career—snapshots, as it were.

In his boyhood we can see Gapon a passionate child, a mystic. His father and mother, simple little Russian peasants, take this for an indication from heaven that the boy is destined to become a priest, and they send him to an ecclesiastical seminaria. There his genuine

religious spirit gets extinguished. In his teens he startles the authorities by nonplussing his spiritual instructor in argument. He becomes carried away with Tolstoi's principles, and when still a youth, visits the simple and the poor, bringing to them the great socialist's teachings. After finishing the seminaria Gapon comes to Petersburg, and passes the difficult entrance examination to the university—but is not allowed admittance "because of his revolutionary character." The latter, however, appears to be no obstacle to his becoming a priest, for he takes orders.

Notwithstanding the name of socialist, which is already attached to him like a strange halo, he is at once given the most profitable post in a large town in the south: the parish which includes the town cemetery. We see Gapon burying the poor for nothing and using the money he gets from the rich to found brotherhoods amongst the destitute. This soon offends both the ecclesiastic and the secular authorities, and the brotherhoods are suppressed. Gapon is not dismayed. He plans a system of schools for homeless children. About this time his beloved young wife dies, and he nearly goes out of his mind with grief.*

After having somewhat recovered from the shock he comes to Petersburg and enters the Ecclesiastical Academy, but presently finds this "High Spiritual School" disappointing, and we see him leaving it and concentrating his energy on a kind of work rather unusual for a Russian priest: he throws himself into

* Priests may not marry again if widowed.

the world of the outcasts (*bossiaki*)*, and presently incites 700 of them to start a " House of Labour " for themselves. Now, in Russia the *bossiaki* are meant to remain *bossiaki* and not to be raised up " higher than their ears." *Gradonatchalnik* † Fullon is startled and sends for Gapon, demanding explanations of his extraordinary behaviour.

" I want to try and restore some of them to human life," says Gapon.

Dumbfounded, Fullon grants his permission. Gapon goes further: he writes an unprecedented formal account, stating the real position of the working classes and demanding reforms, in black and white. The account attracts the attention of every one in the ruling spheres, but certainly does not obtain any official support.

Meanwhile Gapon's popularity amongst the working masses was growing rapidly. There was no need in his case to conceal any natural aristocratic manners in order to approach the down-trodden and unhappy. Gapon spoke in the workmen's own laconic descriptive manner, only still more laconically and directly. His real talent as an organizer, leader, and speaker was startling at that period of his career. He struck the right chords in the right way: he evoked the genuine wisdom that had always been latent in the brain of a Russian moujik, unseen and unbelieved by many, merely helping to mould it, to put the men's own ideas

* *I.e.* " barefooted ones."

† Chief of the Town Police.

into clear shapes—for a "Russian peasant is a born socialist," as Mr. Maurice Baring has observed. At the same time, however, Gapon remembered that there is no tendency to secretiveness in the Russian folk (this is partly the reason why a great deal of the political propaganda, carried on by the educated classes for the last half-century, has failed to attain its aim), and this was the key to his success. Gapon stirred up the working masses of Petersburg to arrive at definite conceptions of their economic and social needs; he made them discuss and demand the socialistic reforms necessary to bring some light and health to them; and yet they never regarded him as "one of those revolutionaries" on whom the general mass of peasants at that time still looked with a certain amount of suspicion. Besides, his influence was based on his knowledge of other national characteristics of the Russian peasants: their instinct for self-organization and their dislike to go beyond what appears to their minds to be actually essential—what carries with it an obvious practical result.

One can well doubt whether a genius for leadership like that of Gapon before January 9, could be consistent with well-planned, deliberate treachery and secret pay. His attitude towards the workmen breathed genuine friendship and understanding.

Even P. Rutenberg, the social revolutionary whom Gapon in the last period of his career tried to persuade to remain his comrade and, like himself, to make money by selling the secrets of the revolution to the Government

—the very man through whom Gapon's treachery became known and met with its deserts—even he in the summing-up of his reports to the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party (1909) says: " What there had been behind the scenes on January 9, and what the part was that Gapon had played in it, is not clear to me even now."

In 1903 we see Gapon start a modest club, " The Petersburg Society of Russian Factory Workmen." The club is instinct with life. Women flock to it as well as men. Gapon says: " Women should be with us, or they will hinder." All see that their leader is " talking sense." First of all they organize practical mutual help of all kinds; readings, discussions, and funds for the unemployed. The people do not consider this as involving them in political conspiracy, and the club grows so fast that new branches of it are opened by Gapon one after another in all the factory districts of Petersburg. The sincerity and energy of the movement are clearly illustrated by the fact that it thrives on poor people's own money, with Gapon's private help in private cases only, but without any contributions from outside. It numbers hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands of members.

But the most conspicuous feature of all is that the movement appears to be allowed! The policemen stand by, listen and say nothing. This unheard-of circumstance gradually becomes such a matter of course, that if anyone expresses doubt as to the desirability of the policemen's presence the rest stop him by

remarking: "Let them be! They are human creatures after all, poor things. They also long to learn some truth."

In barely two years' time there are no less than eleven branches. And the astounding fact is that Gradonatchalnik Fullon himself comes to the opening ceremony of one of them. In full publicity he says: "I am going to help the working classes to overcome the power of capitalism. I will help them to obtain what they need. I am on the side of the people." After this who could interfere with meetings where thousands of men and women were making out a list of their principal needs and demands?

Some agent of the Okhrana would occasionally be recognized amongst them (the common spies are usually instinctively guessed), and Gapon, or one of his many devoted helpers, would quietly say at the beginning of a meeting: "Wait a moment, comrades, there is a stranger amongst us. Make room for the spy to go out." Silently the men would stand aside, and the okhrannik, finding himself alone in his part of the hall, had no course but to walk out, crushed by their polite contempt.

About Christmas 1904 this state of affairs began to attract the attention of all Petersburg. Rumours about "that quaint priest" were circulating in abundance, strongly flavoured with suspicion. It was an open fact that Gapon from time to time visited the head offices of the Secret Police and the ministry of the Interior. He did not tell anyone what he went there

to discuss, but he seemed mysteriously to extract from these interviews more and more freedom for the workmen's movement! His men absolutely trusted his brief explanation: " It is for our good that I go there."

Towards the beginning of 1905 the atmosphere became ominous of some storm approaching the capital. There were rumours of a gigantic strike being planned by Gapon. The Intelligentzia naturally began to seek nearer acquaintance with the man and his famous Eleven Branches of the Union, in the hope of preventing a catastrophe. These overtures were quietly welcomed, but were not allowed to influence the movement: the working masses felt their own power assert itself, and unbelievers from outside were rapidly joining the ranks of Gapon's enthusiastic followers and assistants. As for the sympathetic offers of help from the organized revolutionary parties, they were received with distinct coldness: " You suffer and try for yourselves—and we suffer and try for ourselves. Stick to your own line "—such was, in effect, the answer to the advances of the revolutionaries. Gapon evidently approved this attitude, although he was known to have shown privately to some of his friends amongst the revolutionary Intelligentzia the programme of the workmen's movement, which they were gradually working out with him; its terms coincided exactly with the demands of the revolutionary parties:

" Freedom of person, meeting, strikes, press and creed;

" Improvement of economic and sanitary conditions

for the factory workmen; eight hours' day, reasonable wages, the right to send workmen's deputations;

"Compulsory national education at the expense of the Government;

"Equality of all classes before the Law;

"Institution of a Duma, as a representative national body;

"Amnesty to all 'political offenders.'"

In the first days of January a request was sent from the Petersburg Factory Workmen's Union to the head of some Government works to dismiss an objectionable overseer. It was refused.

"Now it is time to be up and doing," Gapon said.

And in the course of two days, as if by the stroke of a magic wand, 140,000 factory workmen quietly left their posts and assembled in the eleven centres of the Union. Never in the history of Russia have so many speeches been heard in succession. Gapon and a large number of newly found orators spoke from morning till night. A petition to the Tsar was being drawn up. Point after point was discussed, till the leaders saw that every word was clear to and approved by the simplest, as well as by those new members who were joining by the hundred in the course of these last few days. The policemen stood by and listened with their mouths and eyes wide open, wondering at the extraordinary instructions: "The strikers are not to be interfered with."

True, this strike did have a strange aspect. The spirit of opposition this time took a new and peculiar

form : " We are going to seek justice from the Tsar," the people repeated. " He does not know what wrong is being done through the evil work of his officers. But he will understand ; we shall send him a petition."

" No, we shall *take* it to him," Gapon said.

" Yes, we shall take it to him ! " came the echo from all sides —like the spontaneous expression of an inner longing.

This formed the dominant note of the chord : the Russian people were going to speak to the Tsar, face to face, to explain everything to him and ask for justice. All that was left of their faith in him was now crystallized, revived, lifted to religious ecstasy. God, justice, the Tsar and his faithful People—this was the harmony that was to make all things right. . . . A beautiful chimera !

Without any church services or sermons—by the teaching of true socialistic principles in the place of orthodox texts—the priest Gapon roused the national religious spirit to its height. The dying idea of " Tsar the Father " was given a fair chance to exert its old fascination.

Was Gapon playing a foul game ? Could he possibly have believed that the Tsar would listen to his people's explanations and really grant them their personal, political, and economical rights ? (The Tsar who on ascending the throne said point-blank, in so many words, " leave the senseless dreams alone ! ") Or was this the cunning manœuvre of a servile spy to put an end to the annoying problem ?

On Friday, January 7, detachments of cavalry, infantry, and cossacks suddenly appeared all over the town parading in field service order. Here and there—in by no means conspicuous places—bills were posted, without even the signature of General Fullon, briefly stating that "unnecessary gatherings of crowds would be treated according to the law."

All that these people wanted was law—equal law, the same for everybody—but these court promises of "law," evidenced by the cossack detachments, brought painful forebodings with them.

On January 7 and 8 Gapon wrote to the Tsar and to the Minister of the Interior, telling them of the coming procession of the people and asking them not to let it meet a tragic end. There was no reply.

Gapon evidently tried earnestly to avoid giving the smallest appearance of a revolutionary aspect to the planned procession. Those revolutionists who wanted to take part in it were persuaded to refrain from all expression of their party principles, and not to use their party symbols. Red flags offered by some of them were unanimously rejected; banners and ikons from the churches and portraits of the emperor were procured instead. All who joined were possessed by a spirit of fanatical devotion; it was to be a demonstration by loyal petitioners, candid, unarmed, and hopeful. There was to be no defiance, no baiting the police with pieces of red cotton—a proceeding to which, as remarked before, they are as sensitive as bulls.

"Comrades, you will answer to me for the inviola-

bility of the Tsar," Gapon demanded. " If he is in any way insulted, I will shoot myself before your eyes. Do you swear to that ? "

" We do ! We swear ! " And a thousand men were elected from among the one hundred and fifty thousand as a bodyguard to protect from any possible unknown ruffians the person of the Tsar whom the crowds meant to surround in their loyal enthusiasm.

" But what if he will not consent to listen to our delegates ? " Gapon was careful to suggest.

" Then we shall know that we have no longer any Tsar ! " they replied.

People foresaw " something tragic." With a view to preventing it, a deputation of nine respected representatives of science, literature, the Press, and the law, waited on the liberal Minister of the Interior, Prince S. Mirsky, and on Count Vitte. The former could not receive them as he was actually ill with anxiety ; Vitte replied to the deputation that he was powerless, and that " the Government was aware of all the facts." The deputation withdrew, their efforts having thus resulted in failure.

Was the Government aware of Gapon's drawing up a petition which actually meant an " overthrow of the existing order " ? Of course it was.

Was Gapon then playing fast and loose with the Government, being in reality a sincere friend of those who loved him so ?

In the course of those last two days an extra Strike Fund was collected amongst them. The Eleven

Branches threw their doors wide open, giving out food and money, counsel and sympathy; explaining, uniting, solemnly inspiring.

If the whole movement was instigated by the Secret Police, using Gapon as their instrument, it was a rather curious instance of the "provokatzia" system, for everything was done with the hard-earned money of the "provoked" themselves.

On Saturday night the town took on a strange aspect: regiments of troops were encamped in the streets. Soldiers warmed themselves around camp-fires, officers smoked, chatted, and drank tea in their tents. The palace of one of the Grand Dukes was turned into the headquarters of the "General Staff." Red Cross wagons and pickets were placed in the squares along the big arteries of traffic leading from the factory suburbs, and on the ice-bound Neva. The soldiers knew absolutely nothing of the reason for it all; but they are trained not to ask questions. They had only one order: to open fire at the sound of a bugle-call.

Meanwhile Gapon and his enthusiastic assistants were still reading and explaining the petition to the crowds of new-comers, and collecting signatures, many of which were simply the X's of the illiterate. Exhausted and yet persistent, they continued to explain and read by the light of lamps and the gaslights in the street. However queer it may sound to a Western ear, Gapon was the only man who had ever spoken undisturbed to thousands of listeners in the open air, standing on a barrel; barrels—as platforms—are considered very

revolutionary in Russia and are not tolerated. Gapon was hoarse, excited, visibly nervous —but still inspiring, uplifting, beloved. They listened to his reading of their petition bareheaded, as if they were preparing themselves for offering a religious sacrifice.

"What if the soldiers shoot at your approach, comrades?" he asked. "That may happen."

"The first will fall, the others will go on!" they answered him. "There are many of us. There is no other way out for us. We must get at the truth or we shall die before the Tsar's palace. . . . But he won't let that happen! The thing is just to reach his palace and see him!" This was the one great aim.

At first the plan was to place women and children in the front rows—to make any brutality utterly impossible. But finally it was decided that the front rows should be formed of the strongest and biggest men marching arm in arm.

"Move in orderly fashion, quietly, solemnly," Gapon kept reminding them: "Ours is a righteous cause. We are going to seek justice—or we will die!"

"Or we will die!" the crowds echoed. Gapon knew so well the true spirit of the people and expressed their thoughts so readily that the concluding words of each portion of his addresses were often echoed by the crowds in this way.

About 15,000 people fell in and started from the "branches" quite early in the morning, uncovering their heads, crossing themselves solemnly, carrying ikons and banners, and chanting the prayer for their

Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovitch. Gapon was with the men of his branch, approaching along the big tract parallel to the river.

And then the unbelievable took place. The signal bugles resounded wherever the processions approached from the outskirts of the town towards the centre. At first not only the crowds of which the processions consisted, but the soldiers as well could not believe their ears. But it was so. Horrified, scattered by the ensuing rifle volleys, yet believing it was only the false servants of the Tsar barring the way to him for honest people, the crowds rushed past their dead and wounded, and still pressed on their way to the palace. One of the officers commanding the troops pointed out the way along the frozen river for them: "We were not told to shoot there," he said, "but we are obliged to do so if you insist on pursuing this route."

Others, including the "better-trained" cossacks, were appallingly heartless in their obedience to orders.

As the morning went on, crowds of shocked and terrified people, hurt in mind no less than in body, approaching by various byways, eventually poured into the vast square before the Winter Palace. The gay and fashionable Sunday crowds in the Nevsky Prospect, startled by vague rumours and by the sight of men and women running by in a state of great excitement, was rapidly joining the masses of people that were steadily growing in numbers, silently and patiently standing beneath the windows of the palace, kept back from the walls in equal silence by the smart

trim ranks of the Preobrajensky Regiment.* The light iron railing of the Alexander Gardens and the trees hard by were crowded with children, nurses, gymnasia-boys and girls and others, all out to enjoy a sunny, though frosty, morning. The gates of this garden were suddenly found locked by the gendarmes, whose blue uniforms were more conspicuous than ever. Reports kept coming in from the suburbs in quick succession, but the enormous motley crowds remained quiet, completely unaware as yet of what was about to happen here, in the Palace Square.

Suddenly an officer of the Preobrajensky Regiment, deadly pale, was heard to call out from his place: " Disperse—save yourselves—can't you see that we have got to shoot ? "

No one stirred. A few voices raised the natural counter question : " What for ? "

There was the sound of a bugle. The front ranks of the Preobrajensky battalion knelt on one knee, their rifles pointed towards the people.

" Present—fire ! "

Even then no one stirred: all thought it was to be blank cartridge. But in the next moment dead and

* It is possible to visualize the scene of action here described by comparing it to a familiar part of London : the Neva flows along the back elevation of the Winter Palace as the Thames does by the Houses of Parliament. The Palace Bridge corresponds to Westminster Bridge; the Alexander Gardens to Whitehall and the space between it and the Embankment; the " General Staff Buildings " to Westminster Abbey, except that they stand farther back, affording space for an immense square; and the Nevsky Prospect corresponds to St. James's Street (see map, p. 247).

wounded dropped to the ground all along the railing of the Alexander Garden, and off the trees. . . .

"Half right!"—and another volley sped towards the Palace Bridge.

"Half left!"—a third one, this time towards the arch of the General Staff Building.

The scene in Petersburg, from that moment until late at night, beggars description. Detachments of cossacks galloped backwards and forwards through the crowds with which the streets were teeming, beating the people with the flat of their swords. The crowds scattered and flowed together again and again, some throwing stones, others presenting their breasts to the volleys of bullets. The epaulettes were torn from the shoulders of the officers who were addressed with frantic shouts of "Murderers!" . . . Policemen, frenzied at the attacks upon them, fired right and left at random. The dead and wounded were torn away from the police and carried off by their friends, or even by strangers, to the heartrending chant, "Give him rest among thy Saints." These sounds rang through the air mingled with the uproar of moaning, swearing, derision, the clatter of arms and the shouting of revolutionary songs rendered with all the vigour of long pent-up enthusiasm. In some places barricades appeared as if by magic and were held for about three hours.

Newspaper offices were overfilled. The doors leading into the editors' rooms stood open, and numbers of all sorts and conditions of people came in, discussed the events of the last hour, decided on the best ways of

giving immediate help, and went away, in a ceaseless stream. At the same time, piles of copy were confiscated as they arrived and burned on the spot by messengers from the Ministry of the Interior. (No accounts of the events of January 9 appeared until October 18.) No newspapers whatever came out for several days after, but in the course of that Sunday students and revolutionists were lithographing proclamations almost openly on their ever-ready stones. At the same time provocateurs of the common type, taking their chance, were pressing into the hands of the hurrying public petitions of their own manufacture —to get signatures! Scores of these were given, alas! as there was no time to read them. By a strange coincidence the northern sun had two blood-coloured reflections in the frosty mist on that day; then, at 8 P.M., appeared a bright rainbow (an unheard-of phenomenon in January), and this in its turn was followed by a snowstorm.

In the evening the public stopped the performance at the Imperial Theatre, and a secret meeting of the Intelligentzia was held in the Officers' Co-operative Stores. The president opened it by exclaiming, " Vivat Revolution! " and the speakers were unanimous for an armed insurrection. But the quick succession of events was so overwhelming that no one knew how or what to organize—especially considering that so far all had been done by the workmen alone.

Towards night hooligans began to loot small shops in the suburbs. Detachments of soldiers cantered

about and shot at every one who ran. Police tried to burst into private houses. During the night everything became deadly still—the streets lined with bonfires and pickets as in a conquered camp. Only the hospitals and temporary Red Cross centres in private houses were busy with their gruesome work; but there was not one soldier killed or wounded for the thousands of casualties on the other side.

Gapon vanished. Alarming rumours of his death were spread, but in reality he was successfully concealed with the help of Rutenberg, his revolutionary friend, immediately after the first attack on his part of the procession. With Rutenberg's help he sent proclamations to workmen and soldiers, calling upon them to rise. Nothing could be organized in time, and in a short while Gapon was safe abroad.

Arrests in Petersburg followed by hundreds. The nine members of the recent deputation to Vitte and S. Mirsky were put into the Peter and Paul Fortress—as "members of the temporary Government"! The Eleven Branches of the Workmen's Union were closed and looted by the order of the new Gradonatchalnik, who replaced Fullon on the next day. The gigantic strike came to an end in a few days: armed coercion failure, and hunger combined were too much for the strikers.

The cost of the demonstration was enormous. But the idea of the omnipotent "fatherhood" of the Tsar was overturned by himself. That 9th of January was the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of the Russian

workman; it is hardly fair to call him " conservative " now.*

It is very likely that with his as yet unimpaired force of character and his cunning, Gapon had been acting a part not in relation to his workmen but to the high authorities. Prince S. Mirsky and Fullon may have been involuntarily influenced by the artfulness of the energetic leader, and not have realized their error until shortly before their fall. The illness of S. Mirsky may have been the reason why the power suddenly passed into the hands of the military and thus gave the situation a new turn.

It is also quite likely that Gapon was an ardent, reckless, socialist playing a game with the Government for the sake of his world—the workmen's life; in his effort to improve that, he may have thought any means justifiable, and have made the Secret Police believe that he was leading the people into a trap for them, while he himself really imagined that such a brilliant *coup d'état* might lead to some good! Perhaps he thought that cunning was the only weapon against cunning, and when he learned that the Tsar was not to be at the Winter Palace and would not hear of accepting a deputation, it was too late to stop the tidal wave of the people's movement, and at the last moment his resourcefulness failed him.

* On the last anniversary, January 9, 1914, there were 170,000 workmen out on strike, in memory of the victims. The demonstrations were of course interrupted by the police, and—according to the official statements—" the red flags were captured."

However, the silhouette of the passionate leader changes after Red Sunday.

When Rutenberg joined Gapon abroad he found that he had tactlessly placed himself as well as all revolutionary parties in a very awkward position. When various people came to meet him and express their admiration from many different points of view, he would agree with them all. He kept giving graphic, passionate descriptions of January 9, but it is worthy of note that Rutenberg, giving his account of those days, says: "Gapon did not seem to realize the importance of his part in the events of January 9. I had to explain it to him more than once. Anyhow he was sincere at that time."

Presently Gapon found himself a European celebrity; and we see him growing at once vain, restless, aggressive, challenging, nonchalant. With an idea of checking him by means of the discipline of a regular secret organization, and in order to make him work steadily on the hard road to freedom, the Social Revolutionists invited him to join their ranks. But Gapon, intoxicated with his popularity, and spoilt by the fabulous sums he obtained for his writings, gave himself up to the longing to follow his own varied fancies, which clashed with the self-denying atmosphere of the revolutionary circles. Gapon desired to be the dashing leader of a brilliant revolution, not a modest, steady worker like the rest of the party. He declined to join the tedious work in Russia. He would go there when everything was ready for him.

A private friend came from Petersburg and told him that the workmen were thinking of erecting a monument to him in his lifetime. This turned his head. When Rutenberg came from Russia the next time, Gapon was beyond any influence that could be brought to bear on him by his best comrade, who was the last to give up believing in him. Gapon told him that the revolutionists knew nothing of practical life; that some day he would make them all follow him. One day a clever Finn said to him:

" You have had a Gapon in Russia, now you need a Napoleon."

" Very likely I shall be the Napoleon—why not ? " he answered quite seriously.

But he had his moments of misery. He would be seen in some bar in Paris, gloomy in his intoxication. Not knowing a word of foreign languages, he would suddenly begin repeating the first line of some sad Little Russian folk-song. At first no one would know what he meant. But his popularity and his money would eventually result in bringing to him some poor wandering fiddler who would guess what the drunken Russian priest and revolutionist wanted. Then the fiddle would fill the low, sombre room with weird wailing sounds, and the drunken man would sob bitterly, breaking his wild heart over a simple song of his native village.

Lately proofs have been found that about this time Gapon was again getting into communication with the Russian Secret Police.

In November he paid a flying visit to Petersburg.

Pretending to the workmen and revolutionists that the authorities were on his tracks, he managed to rouse the old members of the Workmen's Union to unite again, and himself entered into practical negotiations with Count Vitte: 30,000 roubles were given him through an official "for making good the losses of the Workmen's Union," with an additional 1000 roubles for some vaguely mentioned purpose. Gapon did not dare to tell the workmen from whom this help was coming: they might suspect the game he was starting. The permission to reopen the Eleven Branches was given too.

Gapon went abroad and published in the *Humanité* his somewhat altered ideas. These were approximately as follows:

"The Russian people are not ripe for an armed upheaval. One must favour not this party or that; one should watch the two struggling sides, and then points in common might be found and established. I do not intend to lead the revolutionists: they have no political foresight and no true feeling for our proletariate. It is heartless to test the latter by constant strikes and hunger. I remain a revolutionary, but I ring the bell of warning: beware, heroic Russian proletariate!"

His letter to the *New York Herald* (December 1905) was in the same strain and ended by saying: "I shall despise all the insinuations that will begin henceforth."

In December Gapon was back in Petersburg: twenty-three out of the thirty thousand roubles were stolen

by an official, and the Eleven Branches were closed again.

From this time we see Gapon pardoned and living now in Petersburg, now in Moscow. Rutenberg's reports to the central committee of the Social Revolutionary Party, published by Bourtzeff in 1909, give us a bird's-eye view of this last swift move in Gapon's career and disclose the mysterious quarters from which the strings were pulled.

In the first days of February 1906, Rutenberg clearly realized that Gapon was secretly in the service of the Chief of the Police Department, Ratchkovsky. Cautiously but clumsily Gapon approached Rutenberg, talking about " common sense and the necessity of not being narrow-minded " . . . " Chips fly when a forest is cut down," he would repeat in the words of a Russian proverb. . . . " It would be ridiculous to fear the name of a provocateur ! "

He was now a very different figure from the old Gapon, founder of the Workmen's Union. Fidgety, nervous, with plenty of money in his pocket, trying to give a specious appearance to vile ideas, and constantly dropping into cynical considerations, Gapon gradually imparted to Rutenberg the reasons for his strange proposals :

" Ratchkovsky was after Rutenberg to make his acquaintance : Rutenberg was known for a dangerous, serious revolutionist and was greatly respected by the Police. . . . He (Gapon) had told them about his

being Rutenberg's best friend and therefore they promised him not to spy on him. . . . ."

Rutenberg kept almost silent, listening to this vile attempt to seduce him to become a traitor. Gapon's cynicism was increasing at every one of their meetings. Repulsive as it was to an honest revolutionary, Rutenberg had to pretend before Gapon that he was giving a friendly ear to so advantageous an offer.

"But how about our comrades? I cannot risk their lives," he objected in a way that would seem natural even to Gapon.

"Oh, we shall let them know in time. No one must suffer, of course. They will disperse!" was Gapon's nonchalant answer. "I would shoot myself rather than play traitor to anyone. . . . But 'the chips fly when the forest is cut down,' you know. . . . Ratchkovsky wants me to become his right hand man. Come and have dinner with him: he will pay you 25,000 roubles for that alone. Don't be afraid: no one would join the provocateurs if the Secret Police did not keep them under their own wing!"

Meanwhile Petersburg was buzzing with tales and reports about Gapon; perplexity was expressed and revelations came from all sides, as well as the sincere efforts of some naïve adherents to justify him. Openly Gapon wrote to the papers "a letter to the public" stating that he was deceiving the police; while secretly he wrote to the Minister of the Interior, Dournovo, a statement of his penitence for his former activity.

In revolutionary circles one does not communicate important information in letters. Rutenberg went himself to meet three members of the Central Committee in a country town to report to them what he had found out about Gapon. One of these three men was Aseff, the leader of the terroristic faction called the "Fighting Organisation." Aseff became indignant and instantly declared that Gapon should be at once "crushed like a vile reptile," . . . "Rutenberg ought to stick a knife in his back in the course of a sledge-drive." But, after a discussion, it was decided that both Gapon and Ratchkovsky should be killed while engaged in one of their secret interviews. After that the Central Committee was to admit frankly the arrangement of this move as a political execution, to save Rutenberg's honour and their own from any reproach.

"But if it proves to be impossible to kill both Ratchkovsky and Gapon, then Gapon must be killed alone," Aseff added.

With these instructions Rutenberg returned to Petersburg. Meanwhile, under the influence of the woman who loved him and believed in him,* Gapon demanded a public hearing by the representatives of all revolutionary parties. "Let them prove that I am a thief or a provocateur! There are no proofs whatever," he repeated to Rutenberg.

"What if I told them?" the latter ventured to ask.

* She had been Gapon's civil wife ever since he first came to Petersburg.

"Why, you won't. Besides, I would declare you to be a maniac. There are no proofs."

It certainly turned out to be impossible to trap Ratchkovsky: he knew Rutenberg better than Gapon did, and would not come even to the private little dinner arranged for at a restaurant; he sent spies to have a good look at Rutenberg instead. But he did not arrest him on this occasion. Rutenberg was wanted, as will be seen presently.

Thus, in the end, the only thing that could be done was to show the workmen what Gapon had really become—and leave the rest in their hands. No professional murderers would be required in that case—Rutenberg knew that well.

One day, when Rutenberg was driving with Gapon in the outskirts of Petersburg, it was arranged that the cabman was one of his old "Union" people. He could hardly believe his own ears when he heard their conversation, but he heard enough to realize the new interests of the man who fourteen months before had been his beloved leader. About his public hearing Gapon was no longer thinking. He did not want any. "Damn the whole business!" he said.

What the cabman reported startled the workmen. Most of them up to that time had passionately believed in Gapon. It was decided amongst them that he should be arrested, told their verdict, and killed.

Rutenberg chose for the purpose an empty summer-house (*datcha*) near Petersburg, on the Finland railway, but not in Finland itself, so as not to incriminate the

Finns. He regularly reported the progress of events to Aseff, but never heard a word from him. Naturally taking this silence for a sanction from the Central Committee, Rutenberg finally arranged the matter. On March 26, 1906, he invited Gapon to meet him for a final talk about his conditions in regard to the secret service.

Several workmen were sitting in the next room, behind a thin wooden partition, and heard every word of their long conversation, in the course of which Rutenberg had to pretend that he was considering the details of the offer. Eventually, when it came to Gapon saying that " the workmen shall never learn anything about it," Rutenberg opened the door for the representatives to come in, and himself went out on to the veranda. Incensed as the workmen were, their verdict was instantaneous. Gapon showed the white feather, pleading for mercy in the name of his past achievements.

" Thou hast thrown thy past under the feet of dirty spies," they said, and seized and hanged him on a peg in the wall. Then they locked the house and left it.

It was not a pleasant time for Rutenberg. He had loved the man. But one can imagine his feelings when, on the top of the terrible strain of the last six or seven weeks, he heard from the Central Committee of his Party that they declined to acknowledge the execution of Gapon as the result of their sentence ! The reason they gave was that they had instructed Rutenberg to

kill "both Ratchkovsky and Gapon," and not Gapon only; they declared that the execution of Gapon under the circumstances was considered by them Rutenberg's "private business." More than that: they unexpectedly reproached him with the fact that it was due to his carelessness that an enormous number of arrests had taken place about that time. All this was a frightful shock to Rutenberg, who had been acting under the conviction that he was carrying out the instructions of the Central Committee.

The painful mystery weighed on his mind for over two years; it was cleared up for him only in December 1906, when, being abroad, he read in the papers a piece of sensational news: the Central Committee declared Aseff to have been proved a secret agent of the Political Secret Police—a *provocateur*. Then it became obvious that in the "Gaponiada" the Central Committee had been acting entirely under Aseff's influence. That man had been playing a complicated part: on the one hand, he had been planning the murder of Gapon *and* of the Chief of the Police Department Ratchkovsky, with the special purpose of remaining a dignified terrorist in the eyes of the Central Committee (because about that time the truth about himself was just beginning to leak out); on the other, he kept Ratchkovsky well supplied with information about the details of the plot to kill Gapon. Ratchkovsky was perfectly well aware of the day, place, and other arrangements for Gapon's execution beforehand.

Gapon was too irresponsible, too feeble, too much

inclined to spasmodic action on his own initiative, without the slightest regard to his secret employment and the machinery of the whole system; too artless for the art into which he had been lured.

In conclusion we may briefly quote the opinion of Vladimir D. Bourtzeff, editor of " The Past " :

" The Government had discredited Gapon sufficiently by inducing him to write of his repentance to the Minister of the Interior. But this did not satisfy them. Ratchkovsky was pushing Gapon into the rôle of a secret agent, knowing very well that he was no longer trusted by the revolutionists and therefore was unable to learn and disclose any important secrets. At that time Ratchkovsky had an invaluable assistant in the person of Aseff, who was at the head of the 'Fighting Organisation'; and Gapon was worth nothing at all in comparison with him. When offering to Gapon the commission of seducing into secret service a devoted revolutionist like Rutenberg, Ratchkovsky was perfectly aware that this was hopeless; therefore his aim in this manœuvre was exclusively to place Gapon in a position in which this unreliable secret agent would soon meet with his end.

" Gapon never realised what a worthless burden he must have been on Ratchkovsky's hands—a non-entity, in fact, who could be got rid of without much ado. But the movement that led to January 9—in the course of which Gapon actually managed to circumvent the highest officials—was too bitter a

reminiscence, and Ratchkovsky meant to exact vengeance for it.

"It was Ratchkovsky who led the naïve 'provocateur' to his miserable goal—with the help of a first-class one, Aseff, whose good name amongst the revolutionists was eagerly guarded by the Secret Police. Artfully enough, the latter employed, as their instrument to strike the blow, sincere workmen who had no idea that they were furthering Ratchkovsky's plans."

ASEFF

Aseff must have been born a traitor. He began his career as an ordinary spy in the service of the Russian Political Secret Police when a young student in Carlsruhe. He joined the revolutionists abroad and in Russia to learn their secrets; but, in order to disguise this fact from his new comrades, he soon began taking part in and then organizing terroristic acts. For sixteen years the revolutionary parties (and Aseff's own wife) thought him an honest revolutionist. For about twelve years he did not let his secret employers guess thas he was so active in the camp of their foes. For the last four years or so the Okhrana knew all about it—and sanctioned it for fear of diminishing the benefit they obtained from the other half of his work.

Aseff would with equal callousness lead some corrupt statesman to the edge of the pit—or push down into it at the last moment all those who had helped him to dig it. He remained throughout his career a cool calculator (he was a mathematician by education), and

never cared for anything or anybody—beyond computing in each case the comparative profit of sending into eternity some Minister or Governor-General or, on the other hand, their revolutionary opponents.

When the first anonymous letter denouncing Aseff to the Social Revolutionary Party reached one of the representatives of that Party, it was taken for a malicious fraud. The letter was shown to Aseff without any hesitation. He said that " all there was left for him to do after such a monstrous calamity was to kill himself—for the revolutionists certainly could not stand a single suspected man amongst them."

To console him they answered: " The Secret Police officials want to revenge themselves on you for having planned the assassination of Plehve and the Grand Duke Sergey; that is why they are trying to depict you as a traitor in our eyes."

It never occurred to them that some one amongst the Okhrana might have come to realize the hideousness of Aseff's game and thought it but fair to open the eyes of those who trusted in him. Evidently the author of the letter had reasons to conceal his identity, and this meant that he was one of those who knew the facts. But even the most ardent, devoted, and cautious of the Social Revolutionary Party would not believe it. To verify the accusation by secretly shadowing the leader of their own " Fighting Organization " seemed too absurd and dishonest.

Yet doubts crept in and spread imperceptibly. Some well-organized arrangements and plans of the Party

mysteriously failed when there seemed to be no possibility of their being discovered. But Aseff's comrades would say:

"It must have been our own fault. Something must have been overlooked. Our people will never learn to be cautious enough."

In 1908 arrests came by the hundred. The Party was losing its workers as a forest loses its leaves in autumn. Unexpectedly "discovered," the members would be frequently hanged at sunrise after having been arrested the night before—without any trial. More than once tortures were applied in place of an investigation.*

Many among the Social Revolutionary Party by this time felt suspicion weighing too heavily on their hearts when they found themselves in Aseff's presence. Even his big, thick-set figure no longer carried the impression of physical and moral power with it; there seemed to be something tyrannical in the man's self-possession. "Now that the Party is suffering such heavy losses," they thought, "Aseff ought to check the activity of the Fighting Organization for some time, instead of exposing people to imminent risk."

But he did not check it. One after another terroristic plots were sanctioned or even initiated by him. Some of them struck down the selected victims under condi-

* For instance, by detective and hangman Green, at the Detective Department, with the knowledge of Governor General Skalon, in Warsaw. In January 1906 seventeen boys, sixteen to eighteen years of age, were handed over to Green instead of to the proper authorities for a regular investigation. This was far from being an exceptional case.

tions which seemed surprisingly "lucky" to the revolutionists themselves—as they had no idea that it was Aseff's proximity to their victims that abolished all unfavourable circumstances, once he had decided on their fate. In other cases the doomed men were warned at the last moment in a mysterious way, and dozens of the revolutionists, whether actually involved in the conspiracy or falsely accused, were sent to death instead.

Either contingency was profitable to Aseff. It was he who helped in the assassinations of Colonel Minn, Launitz, Chief of the Petersburg Police, and Pavlov, Procurator of the Petersburg Court of Justice (whom the public called "The Hangman"); it was Aseff who organized the attempts on the life of the Minister of Justice, Scheglovitov; and even three attempts to assassinate Nicholas II. In one of these the Tsar was saved from death by a hair's-breadth, and the failure to attack him was due merely to a chance circumstance: Aseff did all he could to make the attempt successful.

It was not until Bourtzeff opened his brave campaign in the pages of "The Past" and thus brought Aseff before the tribunal of the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party, that the facts became known.

It needed many a document to make clear the truth to his comrades who had seen what they thought his devoted work. For a long time the assassinations of Plehve, the Minister of the Interior, and of Sergey, the Governor-General of Moscow, which were planned by

Aseff, seemed in themselves to be sufficient proofs of his sincerity. Besides these two acts he took part in planning the assaults on Trepov, the Governor-General of Petersburg; Kleigels, the Governor-General of Kiev; Unterberger, the Governor-General of Novgorod; Doubasov, the Governor-General of Moscow (the "extinguisher" of the Moscow insurrection in 1906); Dournovo, the Minister of the Interior, and others. Each of these statesmen had sent hundreds of people to the gallows for their spirit of sedition, actual or imaginary.*

Therefore, having been enabled to find opportunities for assaulting these high officials, the Terroristic Party naturally felt obliged to the man who had helped them by his advice, ingenuity, experience, and talent for organization. But how could they know that he was a cold-blooded genius of hypocrisy before anything else? They had no idea that all these terroristic plots were followed by the Okhrana, step by step, move by move; that Aseff's secret employers were well aware of all members of the Revolutionary Party who were in any way concerned in political assassinations—their whereabouts, appearance, real names, and fixed times and places of observation—observation which sometimes lasts weeks and months before an attempt is finally made. How could Aseff's comrades believe that he revealed their most important secrets to the Okhrana? They knew that it was he who had organized the

* Over seven thousand scaffolds have been erected so far in the reign of Nicholas II.

hiding of prohibited literature from abroad in ice-cellars; they knew that he was fully acquainted with the existence and activity of their secret printing offices and bomb factories; they had got quite used to the fact that they could live in Russia concealing themselves by means of false passports; their conferences took place undisturbed under various pretexts; their Central Committee itself sat for several years in Petersburg, and many people who were connected with the planning of the assassinations of Plehve and Sergey were not even arrested. Never before had the "Fighting Organization" lived through such a brilliant period of activity!

But the revolutionists did not know that the members of that "Fighting Organization" were not touched because that was the carefully planned understanding on which Aseff worked for the Okhrana. The idealists could not conceive that what was overlooked by the latter was overlooked purposely to save Aseff from the Party's suspicions; for he was needed. A certain amount of terroristic activity gave the higher officials of the Secret Police a chance to check a number of plots and thus to obtain promotions and rewards.

These promotions and rewards can be well imagined through comparison when one knows that their secret agent Aseff (besides his monthly salary of 1000 roubles) would get several thousand roubles for each "job"; over and above which it became a custom for the gendarmes and *okhranniki* to give him a select supper-party in the private room of a restaurant, where the

orgy would last till the dawn appeared to light up the execution of his last victim.

The Okhrana called Aseff "more their own than a revolutionist"; while the revolutionists might have called him "more their own than a secret agent," though they would never have consciously admitted to their world anyone who had been known to have any connection with the Okhrana, under any circumstances.

The assassination of the Grand Duke Sergey had not been prevented for the following reasons: The Petersburg Okhrana, knowing all about the plot from Aseff, informed its Moscow branch about it, but gave no permission to arrest any of the terrorists who were preparing the assault. The latter were daily shadowing the Duke, sometimes disguised as cabmen and pedlars, holding bombs for hours in their arms, waiting for a chance to get to close quarters with him when unaccompanied by the Grand Duchess. In their turn, these reckless heroes—calm in their readiness for death either on the spot or on the gallows—were themselves shadowed by the agents of the Moscow Okhrana. The Grand Duke was not warned in any way. The plot was left to ripen—the two camps watching eagerly, but Sergey himself completely unconscious of the complex proceedings. As a result of this, one day he left the Palace without much formality, unexpectedly drove in a new direction and met Kaliaiev, or in other words sudden death.

This time the Secret Police failed in their calculations: there could not be any rewards for "finding out a

criminal plot in time." Aseff was secretly kept on the premises of the Okhrana in Petersburg for two days, until it was agreed that he should " make up for " this unpleasant contretemps.

To screen the lost game, its " ends were dropped in water," as the Russian saying has it. This was not a new experience for the Russian Government. But Aseff's whole career was so impudent that its ends were too long to be hidden even in water. In December 1908 he had to appear before the tribunal of his former friends in Paris. Minute investigations and documents proved the facts; but the proofs were finally driven home by an unexpected occurrence.

General Lopoukhin, a retired Director of the Police Department (1902–1905), was approached by his old acquaintance V. Bourtzeff in a private conversation, in a train between Cologne and Berlin. Bourtzeff, being the first man who openly denounced Aseff and thus brought him to the revolutionary tribunal, had been eagerly waiting for his opportunity to buttonhole the reticent, pedantic, but (in his way) honest old man. In the course of their conversation it appeared that Lopoukhin had always thought Aseff to be only a pretended revolutionary specially acting the part for the purpose of getting at the revolutionists' secrets. When he learnt from Bourtzeff that Aseff actually organized, the assassinations of Plehve and the Grand Duke Sergey, and at that very moment was plotting a new attempt on the life of the Tsar, he was so startled that he listened attentively to Bourtzeff's numerous proofs for several

hours and finally acknowledged that he had known Aseff as a "secret agent."

Lopoukhin had been a steady official in his time and kept strictly to his business. Although he had never liked the work, he had never betrayed any other secrets of his Department, and was rather pleased to retire after three years' service at the head of the Police Department. He had never seen any good in the secret system of provokatzia and thus differed from Ratchkovsky, Gerassimov (Chief of the Okhrana in Petersburg), and the Prime Minister Stolypin himself. So Lopoukhin had to be made to pay the penalty on the first pretext.

General Gerassimov tried personally to persuade him not to denounce Aseff to the revolutionists: the precious agent was wanted badly! Aseff came and pleaded too, trembling. But the old official bluntly declared that he would not tell lies if he should be asked. For this "criminal" truthfulness Lopoukhin was called to trial at the Senate and charged with "having helped the Secret Party of Social Revolutionists." The verdict ran:

"Notwithstanding the request of General Gerassimov and of Aseff, General Lopoukhin incriminated Aseff with the Social Revolutionary Party by acknowledging that he, Aseff, had been connected with the political espionage institutions of the Government."

He was sentenced to five years' hard labour and then to banishment in Siberia.

The scandal was enormous. Aseff fled from the tribunal in Paris under cover of night, during a break in

the proceedings. The highest authorities hastened to hush up the affair. Later, having lost his pay and his prestige with the Russian Government, Aseff wrote to the Social Revolutionary Party asking for a new trial, confessing his crimes and promising many revelations. The Government was so frightened, that they disclosed Aseff's whereabouts, hinting that the revolutionists were at liberty to make away with him. But the Party would not have anything more to do with Aseff. They decided to punish him with their silent contempt. He probably is still alive somewhere—an absolute nonentity, after having so long acted a leading part in both camps.

BOGROV

It is with great reluctance that one puts the name of Dm. Bogrov in the same category with Aseff. One cannot help hoping that facts about him will come to light some day to prove that his connexion with the Okhrana was, at the worst, an error on the part of an extreme, but honest, revolutionist. So far as our present knowledge goes, unhappily, it makes it impossible to omit the name of Bogrov when speaking of the puzzling personalities whose names are associated both with revolutionary circles and with the secret moves of the Russian Government.

Nothing can be definitely stated about Bogrov's actions except his last step; he fatally wounded the Prime Minister Stolypin (September 1, 1911) by shooting at him point-blank in the stalls of the Kiev Opera House,

which he entered by means of a ticket given to him by the Chief of the Kiev Okhrana.

There are two stories as to the date at which he had been made a "secret agent": one version states that he was a gymnasist of fourteen when the adherents of the Okhrana seduced him into joining their numbers; the other alleges that this happened in 1908, when Bogrov was first arrested in Kiev. At that time it was intended to check his revolutionary work by hard labour in Siberia; this prospect was "simply and gently" pointed out to him with the alternative of perfect freedom "on some trifling conditions"; he was to furnish the names and whereabouts of certain revolutionists.

It is very likely that the problem of Bogrov's career will not be solved for a long time to come—and this for two reasons. The first is Bogrov's own nature: he was a man of exceptional reticence and self-control. He was beloved by his family, yet they never knew that his principles were those of a determined anarchist-individualist. He was liked by all revolutionary comrades, yet they never knew much about his private life, plans, or even work. He was a University man, from Kiev, and known as a gifted man, of great learning and refinement, reserved manners, deep convictions, and—unlike the serious Russian revolutionaries—of sporting tastes. There was a certain elegance about his habits which tended to conceal his real powers.

The second circumstance which helps to obscure the truth is, that the record of all the facts remains exclusively in the hands of the Commission which was sent

to investigate the affair. Notwithstanding Russia's unanimous demand for an open investigation the Commission consisted of a few of the highest officials of the Secret Police, who took every precaution that not a word of what Bogrov said should ever be divulged. A year ago it was officially announced that " the record of the Bogrov affair had been placed among the Archives." What he must have told in the course of his three hours' secret trial, and the twelve days that intervened between his last night at the theatre and his execution, was presumably not of such a nature that it could be disclosed by his " judges." It would have meant a challenge on their part to public opinion on circumstances the disclosure of which would have probably revealed too much activity behind the scenes. What may reasonably be surmised is this. After the one moment of weakness in his life, which brought him into relations with the Okhrana, Bogrov's deeply revolutionary spirit must have been in an everlasting struggle with this secret. As soon as he saw his comrades' suspicions gathering like clouds over his head, he must have quietly decided to die as a revolutionary at the first opportunity. His path lay clear before him. He was always of the opinion that terroristic acts should be planned and executed by individuals. " Complicated plots," he used to say, " always give more chances to the secret agents of the police." Evidently he shared the views of Lebedintzef—the idealist-terrorist, an aristocrat by birth—who thought that " it was better to die oneself than to send others to death."

Now for the facts that are definitely known.

Towards the end of August 1911, the Tsar and Stolypin were expected in Kiev. The rejoicing was confined on that occasion chiefly to the circles of the local police, who hoped to receive countless rewards and thanks for organizing the arrangements. Under these circumstances Bogrov decided to kill Colonel Kouliabko, the Chief of the Kiev Okhrana. Consequently, on August 26, he put a Browning pistol in his pocket and betook himself to the head offices, which an ordinary citizen prefers never to see in his life. Colonel Kouliabko welcomed his guest heartily (Bogrov had not been seen on the premises for the last two years). But there were two men with him, a circumstance which made Bogrov postpone his plan for the time being. He thus found himself obliged to give some reason for his visit, and, on the spur of the moment, invented a story about "Nicholas and Nina, terrorists, who were to make their way into the theatre on the night when the Tsar would be present at the performance, and kill Stolypin."

Notwithstanding the absurdity of such a tale, the representatives of the Okhrana instantly believed—or pretended to believe—every word of it; they wrote an official protocol about it on the spot and wanted Bogrov to sign it. He declined positively. Nevertheless, this protocol was presently despatched to the next highest authorities and to Stolypin himself. . . . With his sanction, the "plot" was left *to ripen.*

Meanwhile, Bogrov was amiably offered a ticket for September 1. Then, and *only* then, realizing suddenly

how easy the way was being made for him, it occurred to Bogrov that it was " not worth while killing Kouliabko when he was given a chance to do away with Stolypin, or even the Tsar." The last thought, however, he soon dismissed, for he had Jewish blood in his veins and did not wish his nation to suffer for his deed.*

Bogrov never consulted anyone about his plan, although his comrades in Kiev had never breathed a word of suspicion against him—in short, he had never been openly reproached by the revolutionists; their suspicions remained vague—until the event. His success was marred for them by the startling news that the ticket for the performance had been actually given to Bogrov by the Okhrana. . . . Bogrov had always regarded Stolypin as the evil spirit of the reaction, and therefore thought that his assassination would be a fair blow to the system which employed as its instruments the secret corruption and degradation of which he himself was a victim.

The five days that remained before September 1 were spent by Bogrov in his usual manner—that of a gentleman of leisure. The only significant words of his that could be recalled by those who saw much of him about that time, were: " There is usually one moment in the life of a man for the sake of which he has lived."

When giving Bogrov his ticket, Kouliabko promised him—and fulfilled his promise—that no one would be shadowing him in the course of the remaining days,

* Aseff also was a Jew; but the Russian Government evidently forgets its anti-Semitism on special occasions.

and that no one would interfere with him in the theatre itself. He was required merely to point out the mysterious "Nicholas and Nina." (It has been explained above that the secret police are kept well informed by the provocateurs and ordinary spies of the whereabouts and plans of the terrorists; what they finally need for arresting them when they are really to be arrested is just to know their actual identity.) Carte blanche was actually given to Bogrov on that historic night. The secret police were actually found to be absent from the stalls—except its highest officials, of course—when the deed was done. What can be the explanation of all this? Stolypin had never shown any fear of being assassinated, for he knew no attempt could be made upon him without his being forewarned by the Okhrana. That being so, the assassination must have taken place with the knowledge and approval of that body—a secret approval, and certainly not bestowed on such a deed out of respect for revolutionary principles.

Stolypin was leaning against the orchestra balustrade in the interval between two acts, and was looking at the house filled with its brilliant audience, when Bogrov rose from his place in the stalls, a few rows off, quietly approached the Prime Minister and shot at him several times in succession. The Tsar was standing at that moment in his box and saw it. Before anyone touched Bogrov he had almost reached the passage, but there some officers of the Okhrana very nearly finished him on the spot with their sabres.

Stolypin died on the third or fourth day after.

The execution of Bogrov was carried out after midnight, beyond the town, on "The Bald Hill." Only the police, the gendarmes, and the officials of the Okhrana were present. The only light that fell on the hurriedly accomplished deed was that of torches. Bogrov wore the evening dress which he had not taken off since that night at the theatre; he calmly directed the hangman how to arrange the shroud, and, unassisted, mounted the stool. There was no one about by whom he could send a message into the world. Perhaps he would not have sent one, if there had been. These details, and nothing else, were recorded in the official information.

The feelings with which Bogrov mounted the steps of the scaffold were no doubt similar to those which filled Kaliaiev's heart after the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergey; the calm enthusiasm of a fighter who has avenged hundreds of murders of innocent men and women done in cold blood.

True idealistic terrorists always hope that they will not be killed at the moment of their attack, but will live through the exaltation which accompanies the period while they are awaiting execution, and will walk into the arms of death with a glad heart, happy to give up their lives for their cause. This conception, these feelings and hopes, which they experience in their self-sacrificing activity, make them blind to one part of the truth which has been acknowledged even by Goutchkoff, the leader of the

Octobrists,* in a speech in the Duma during the tumultuous times when everybody vainly hoped to see the doings of the Okhrana brought to light and public judgment: "Terrorism puts a weapon into the hands of Reaction." So it does. And that is why the system of provokatzia continues and flourishes. It is only the terrorism that occurs without the Okhrana's sanction of which the Government is in constant fear.

Count Paul Vassili, the author of the memoirs entitled "Behind the Veil at the Russian Court," mentioned above, says that "Gapon suggested to Count Vitte that he should persuade the workmen of the different factories around St. Petersburg to present a petition to the Emperor. This petition would furnish a pretext for actively crushing the smouldering rebellion."

This may be true. (If it is, what deluded idealists the revolutionaries and workmen have proved to be!) It is at variance with the view of Gapon's personality expressed in these pages, but it shows up the system of provokatzia at its best!

Nicholas II's flight in the middle of the night to Tsarskoie Selo, in wild alarm at the thought of his people coming to see him in person (as he had been informed), is graphically described in Count Paul Vassili's memoirs:

"If they are not turbulent, then one must treat them as if they were so," said Nicholas II, giving his instructions for that day.

* The Party in the Duma who believe, or pretend to believe, that Russia *has* got a constitutional Government since October 17, 1905.

When these were carried out, and all was over and reported to him, he asked only one question:

" Are you sure that you have killed enough people ? "

Except for his admiration for Alexander III and " the sweet Empress Marie," Count Paul Vassili's book throws valuable light on a certain sphere of Russian life. Though one of the Court, he is not hypnotized by the atmosphere in which he has spent his whole life, and his judgment is strikingly sound. Personalities well within his knowledge, especially those of Nicholas II and the " dictator," the " Major-Domo of the Palace," Stolypin, stand out alive. I cannot do better than ask the readers of this book to read " Behind the Veil at the Russian Court," which forms, so to speak, a beam of light parallel to that which this volume seeks to throw on Russia. I need only say that Count Paul Vassili makes a few inevitable mistakes in the details of events outside Court life—inevitable, considering the remoteness of the eminence from which he views them. Where things can be judged only from an inside knowledge of the facts, he is not an authority. That is where his little mistakes come in, *e.g.*:

Gapon did *not* escape by the care of the police, but by the care of the revolutionaries, who believed in him whole-heartedly. The crowds of workmen did *not* reach the Winter Palace undisturbed. The description of the day given above is taken from first hand statements. And, above all, Bogrov did *not* play simply the part of a tool in the hands of the Okhrana, as one gathers from Count Vassili's pages. The case was

much more complex: honesty and a feeling of duty were at the bottom of this "horrible" murder.* The Okhrana did *not* know that Bogrov had come to that state of mind in which nearly all provocateurs eventually come if they have been enticed into the degrading rôle from amongst the ranks of revolutionists.

It is just this acquaintance with the inner motives of people in a sphere so far removed from his that this honest Russian courtier naturally lacks. Otherwise he is splendid, both in knowledge and in the light he throws on facts.

In speaking of the grim farce of the 300th Anniversary of the Romanoff Dynasty he says:

"The amnesty so solemnly promulgated proved to be nothing else than a farce. All the thieves and common malefactors who were crowding the prisons of St. Petersburg were set free, but the political exiles, men of culture and of the highest civic and private virtue, were left to their sad fate, with only their sorrow and their despairing memories.

"There was one personage who had been the object of the general pity, because a feeling of honesty, unknown generally in a man placed in the position he was in at the time of his fall and condemnation, had led him to tell the truth about the conduct and machinations of the

* "Horrible"—unless one shares my view, that the assassination of so cold-blooded a dictator as Stolypin appears to be in the pages of Count Vassili's book is not more horrible than those of his less famous opponents—down to the innocent "revolting spirits" of all kinds being driven to madness well within his knowledge.

political police of which he was the head. M. Lopoûkhin had been followed into his exile by the sympathy not only of those who knew him well, but also of many persons who had never seen him. It was felt that he was a victim of a corrupt order of things, perhaps also of private revenge coming from such high quarters that one could not even mention them. One had fully believed that the three hundredth year of the reign of the Romanoff Dynasty would bring him a free pardon and the right to take up once more his place in the society that had never excluded him from its midst. But March 6 came and went, and nothing was heard about this unfortunate man, and this indifference to his fate roused such a storm of indignation everywhere that even the feelings of loyalty of many who until then had never wavered began to be shaken in presence of this arrant injustice.

" A few days later, however, the mistake was rectified, and M. Lopoukhin was allowed to leave Siberia; but the first impression could not be corrected. It was felt that this act of mercy, coming as it did after the time it was hoped for, was robbing it of its whole grandeur and generosity. On the Jubilee Day it would have raised a universal acclamation; a week later it fell flat, because it appeared to have been merely compelled by the general indignation."

This passage is very interesting as coming from the pen of a Russian who has lived in the very centre of the Court circle. We will allow him the " grandeur and generosity " which he would have seen in Lopoukhin's

release if it had been given at the right moment (instead of recognizing it as an act demanded by the barest honesty and decency).

At any rate, Russia would get a sprinkling of the Water of Life, as in the fairy tales, if courtiers of Count Paul Vassili's type were the rule, not only the exception, and tried to speak their mind . . . from the top of the ladder in Russia herself.*

* It is a great relief to be able to add that during January 1914, while this book was in the press, the following expressions were used in a speech to the Duma by Baron Rosen, formerly Russian Ambassador in Japan, a thorough bureaucrat and a convinced opponent of all socialistic and revolutionary ideas: "Autocracy is threatened with paralysis . . . our domestic policy is promoting nothing but bitter feeling and antagonism towards the Government . . . attempts to turn the wheel of history backwards have never proved successful . . . the ship of monarchism is approaching dangerous rocks." This regenerated servant of the State concluded his historic speech by asking his former colleagues "to stand up against the pitch-dark night of reaction and the policy of narrow nationalism." This—at a sitting of the Council of Empire, at St. Mary's Palace!

X

SILHOUETTES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

TAKEN en masse, the Russian children are not nice. To begin with their looks. They have none of that beautiful pink and white complexion or those pretty blond curls which are so dear to the heart of every English mother; in cases of exceptional health the Russian children look as if their cheeks have been smeared with squashed cherries. But one sees this only in the villages of the south. No child in Russia (except a few dozen of the Anglicized ones) has any notion of the meaning of a cold morning bath; those above the peasant class when they have a hot one are kept indoors for twelve hours after, and they never think of sleeping with their windows open, except in the summer heat. True, flannel or woollen underwear is unknown to them, and thick English woollen stockings and heavy boots are a thing which would appear mighty uncomfortable to Russians, whether young or old; but they are equally ignorant as to what regular daily exercise means; and so the new schools which include football or tennis in their programme attract only the up-to-date people, who realize the need of thorough physical training. On the other hand, there is not one bedroom in Russia with slanting ceilings, no rooms are built immediately under the roof, and every modern bed-

room in an ordinary home is built to contain 400 cubic feet of air per person.* Therefore when Russians come to England they shiver in their linen underwear and in the cold English houses, but they say: "Of course one has to keep the windows open through the night in these poky little holes, otherwise one would choke." In the homes and schools of the new type, where physical training has been introduced, the drill is carried out on the most correct and scientific lines, and the Prague Society "Sokol" (the Falcon) possesses a large number of excellent special instructors and members in all big Russian towns, who excel in the performance of the most complicated gymnastics.

Sport of a kind, though it neither goes by the name of sport nor is organized as such, springs up naturally, so to speak, in the country: small village children clad in shirts and nothing else are often to be seen riding bare-backed on fiery steeds like weird little caricatures of the horsemen on the Parthenon frieze. Rowing is one of the chief forms of recreation (punting and canoeing are unknown), but there are very few rowing-clubs in Russia. Sometimes even the possibility of that pleasure is overlooked! I know of a case when a young girl student was invited to spend the summer with a family of friends at their country estate. She came and found everything on a magnificent scale: a beautiful large house with all the latest appliances of modern hygiene and comfort; a beautifully clean village

* The prisons are built on the same hygienic lines, which, however, does not prevent their being overfilled.

tended and run by the landowner—containing a school and a hospital; an English park and an English garden, kept by a genuine English gardener; even a tennis court, and a much used one too.

A lovely, broad, quiet river stretched at the foot of the garden, and on finding it the young guest naturally looked round expecting to see an English boathouse. But there was no boathouse and no trace of boats. After a thorough but futile hunt amongst the magnificent willows she went and asked the good-natured owner of this beautiful place where they kept their boat.

"What boat?" he asked.

"The sculling boat which you use on the river."

"We don't use any boat."

"What? You don't go on that splendid river of yours?"

"No."

"But how can it be possible? Why?"

"We somehow never thought of it. It is so lovely to lie on the bank and just look at the water and think."

"Isn't there any boat in the village at all?"

"No, except the fisherman's dirty thing. But wait a moment!" the host cheerfully exclaimed, "I believe I have heard of a boat. Yes, yes. Old Dmitri keeps one! He used to be our gardener before our English one came. Hi, some one! Send old Dmitri to me."

After some search old Dmitri with the silver beard of a king of ancient times and a twinkle in the corner of his eye came to fetch the young *baryshnia* and took her down to the place where the boat was kept.

It appeared to be the trunk of a huge tree, which he had hollowed out; and there the likeness to a boat ended. The young lady had enough sense of humour to enjoy a sojourn of nearly an hour in it; what practically drove her out of it was the necessity either of kneeling in order to be able to row or of lying absolutely flat. So next time she brought down some cushions with her, and a special kind of river sport was thus established in the place.

But I wanted to talk about Russian children.

In the villages they are born naturally wise, and at the age of eight or so become serious helpers in every kind of work, but they are hard put to it to live till this age. The death-rate among the children of the peasant population in Russia is something appalling. In the summer, when whole villages are out in the fields working from the small hours of the morning till sunset, only the babies and the helplessly old people remain in the huts. (No one returns home for dinner.) The babies are provided with bottles of milk in which black bread has been soaked, or with chewed poppy seeds and water to make them sleep the whole day long. Those of the poor population who live through such an infancy become a sturdy, hardy, wiry sort of people; they can work on miserable food harder than the average English workman does on a more or less regular and decent breakfast and dinner. The average Russian moujik feeds on salt cabbage, salt cucumbers, sunflower-seed oil, kasha, and black rye bread; also milk and eggs when a famine has not compelled him to sell his cow

TWO TROÏKI

From the painting by N. Sverchkoff

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and fowls. The salt cabbage stewed with a lump of meat and fat makes his luxury—*shchi*. And with it all he has no notion of having a "liver" and has never heard of indigestion.

Indigestion is never discussed, nor even mentioned amongst the Russians. Cases of it do occur—at least cases of what I imagine to be real indigestion, from what I can gather; but it is in the list of illnesses which occur rarely—and it does not form a topic of conversation. One does not hear of indigestion at all times and occasions, one does not take an interest in it, one does not mention it in dining- and drawing-rooms. When I first came to England I remembered having involuntarily blushed each time at the sound of the word indigestion. Besides, what surprises us greatly is the unanimous readiness with which people in this country seem to put all sorts of ailments down to indigestion: headache, giddiness, red nose, pain in different parts of the body, breathlessness, healthy blushing cheeks—all call forth a compassionate, wise look and a sympathetic pat on the back. "Indigestion, my dear, indigestion! That's what it is."

However wild and rude we are on other occasions, it seems to us somewhat unappetising to discuss such a thing. *Why* we don't suffer from indigestion notwithstanding the irregular meals, the rich food, the frequent over-eating, and practically the lack of regular exercise, seems to be a mystery. Yet the fact remains; it is a fact which makes English people look surprised when they hear of it, and shake their heads, but it makes us

laugh heartily. The other day a Russian mother was given a form to be filled in on the occasion of her boy entering an English school, where much attention is paid to health.

"What's that?" she asked, on coming to the paragraph which inquired whether the child had ever suffered from indigestion.

I explained.

"Goodness gracious! Why on earth should he? Certainly not!" and she indignantly crossed the question out. And so would every other Russian mother.

The peasants' children are extremely eager to learn, and, as I have already stated, mostly very intelligent. Modern peasantry is longing to be taught "mind and wisdom" as they call it. But the children of the "suburbans" * and of the factory hands are such a rough and vulgar, often cruel, set of youngsters that they can in no way be compared to the average children of an ordinary English elementary school. In fact the only work the educationists dislike is the paid teaching at the Government's factory schools. There maltreatment of the masters and mistresses goes as far as throwing logs of wood at them—and one can only wonder to the verge of perplexity how on earth it is that these young brutes do eventually turn into nice men and women; and also what they would be if the difficulty of bringing them up decently could be mastered.

* One of the nine orders of the Russian people.

The same question presents itself as one watches attentively the homes of society in general and even the Intelligentzia. However much it goes against the grain, it must be admitted that keenness of thought amongst the educated classes does not concern itself with the childhood of Russian boys and girls under twelve or fourteen. They are gifted, clever—yes, but in the vast majority of cases lazy, self-willed, quarrelsome, noisy, offhand, and disorderly to an extent which would thoroughly upset an English home and become the talk of a whole district. I will even risk offending my countrymen by saying that, *if* any children at all are to be smacked, such spoiled Russian ones should be selected for that purpose first. With this sort of youngster it is no wonder that on coming to England we find the English children "born with perfect manners," as one Russian teacher remarked in her astonishment.

The disorderliness is partly due to the universal system of living in flats, which sometimes contain as many as twenty-five spacious rooms: things are easily left about all over the place, and the general habit of using the bedrooms as private studies as well, gives too much chance of lying about on the beds when reading or preparing lessons.

Owing to the constant intercourse between the children and the grown-up people, mental interests grow at a very early age. Therefore, taking into consideration the Russians' inability of bringing up small children one can well understand that such conditions of home life have a twofold result: on the one hand

a considerable amount of good from the point of view of the acquisition of knowledge itself and the development of an impressionable nature, and, on the other hand, a great deal of harm to the health. That chief object and preoccupation of the English parent—"the children's happiness"—does not exist in Russia. No Russian child of twelve would be satisfied with the little picture-books and stories, chiefly of a humorous nature, which are printed for English nurseries: he wants serious books and—novels! Thus it happens that sometimes the reading of good books and bad, written for grown-up people, is carried too far: the child not only begins to think too much, but to doubt and suffer, to become disillusioned and critical at an age when English boys and girls are chiefly interested in games, sports, and fun. Add to this the ardent discussions on acute social problems which are constantly heard in some homes, or the conversations savouring of the piquancy of a French novel, which take place in others, and you will understand that it is easy for young minds that grow up in that atmosphere to become either too sensitive or too shallow. Children thus often develop either into mystics or the most selfish and cynical youngsters imaginable; and the higher the social position of their parents the more likely one is to find selfishness and egoism amongst the boys and girls.

However, there are many children who at the age of fourteen or fifteen already begin to take an acute interest in public affairs; for instance, a well-known picture shows classical gymnasia boys walking with

university students and sharing the enthusiasm of the crowd of Intellectuals. I must ask my reader to believe me that it is not the love of noise that has brought those boys and their kind to rejoice at the manifesto granting the so-called constitution. There are many school-children who revel in political questions and dream of social work for the good of Russia; though their discussions on religion and love might cause some amusement to a foreign listener.

It would not be fair to the Russian children to omit mention of the recent event which acquired the name of "the children's case." In 1913 one of the Petersburg schoolboys in a Government classical gymnasia shot himself. "Life is choking me," he wrote in his last note. Hundreds of school children came to his funeral. This was sufficient for the police to search their homes and schools, looking for the "spirit of opposition against the existing order." The only thing they detected was a children's society for self-education—a secret one, it is true, because they were afraid that they would not get the requisite permission if they asked for it. It was a regular serious literary and debating society. All that was political about it was the intention of the children to go to the Nevsky Prospect on the day when a meeting was to be held in memory of the victims of the Lena outrage (which excited the interest of all Europe at the time of its happening). Many children were arrested, some for one day only, others for several days. There were many ridiculous, pathetic and atrocious scenes. "Mother does not

know. . . . She will be frightened if I don't go home to-day. . . . Please let her know."

Most of these children were expelled from their schools. A good and rich man sent five of them to Switzerland and placed them there in good schools at his own expense. This was considered to be so objectionable that he was declared to be insane, and on that ground his property in Russia was confiscated!

The revolutionary upheaval which failed in its final aim through its lack of organization and caution, used up a large amount of nerve, energy, and self-confidence—a result which was inevitable in view of the Slavonic temperament. Accordingly, the period of reaction that followed was pregnant with shallow romanticism, pleasure-hunting, and decadent positivism mingled with cynicism; it made writers of no special gifts hastily scribble sensational books of a doubtful artistic value, which in their turn upheld the wave of sensuality and of gloomy scepticism. This was the ultimate explanation of the appalling number of suicides among students and school children which took place during three or four years.

It is pleasant, however, to be able to remind my reader of the recently established private schools, the search for a new religion, and the fine work performed by the best element of the Studentchestvo; these combined forces will help the highly strung Russian children, who so seldom get a sane, cloudless, and healthy childhood, to achieve sobriety and discretion in their early teens. And then the early awakening of thought and

feeling will bear good fruit instead of a harvest of suicides.

. . . . . .

English authors who have described their visits to Russia are really generous in not having mentioned our table manners. I must say that there are practically none! Of course one learns some with the natural growth of politeness and good taste as one grows up, but there exists nothing like the English code of table manners, which children are taught from babyhood. In fact, no Russian has ever heard that drinking tea from a spoon or leaving the spoon in the cup is bad manners; he does not pay the slightest attention to the relative position of his cup and his plate on the table, and he uses the butter knife for buttering his own slice of bread—after which he puts it back as innocent of his crime as an angel! With us, people of ordinary good society begin to eat as soon as they are given their plate, without waiting for the rest of the company, and what is more, they eat horribly quickly, talking all the time and not allowing their knives and forks to rest for a single moment. When they have finished a course, the men very often get up and take a walk up and down the room. And not one of them is taught to get up and open the door to a lady simply because she is a woman, although, I hope, by now, I have made it clear that the universal respect for woman is expressed in Russia in many different ways. Nor are children taught to stand aside and let ladies or visitors pass through a door first.

I can well imagine the English reader's face of horror when he reads of these atrocities; indeed, they begin to jar even on us Russians when we have lived in England some time. On the other hand there are a few polite customs in our country which mean a good deal to us in the way of good taste and considerate feeling. For instance, we *never* finish any meal without saying "Thank you" to the hostess; we always greet every one in the room, or whenever we first see them in the course of the day, even though they are strangers; and when saying good-bye or leaving a room, we never ignore any one of those present. (Indeed, we might be prepared to admit that politeness is overdone in this respect.) Also—we never touch jam with a knife; it sets our teeth on edge.

One does not dress for dinner either, except on grand occasions; and the table is everywhere laid in a different way according to the individual taste of the hostess. Therefore the two inevitable spoons at the sides of the salt-cellars in each corner of every English table afford much amusement to us. No grace is ever said, of course, but many, except the most broad-minded, cross themselves before and after the meals quite mechanically—as well as when starting a journey.

Walking arm-in-arm is another matter in which English and Russian manners differ: here it seems to be the monopoly of 'Arrys and 'Arrietts, while in Russia it is a universal custom of the educated classes—in broad daylight, too!—not only as a pleasure but as a matter of politeness.

The Russian idea of cleanliness also has its peculiar features. The Russian peasant keeps his calves and sheep just behind the wooden partition which divides the shed from his one and only room where he lives and sleeps: and often there is a door in this partition. But he goes every Saturday to the public *bania* (bath-house of his village) and cleanses himself thoroughly—not only with water, but with suffocating heat and steam; after which he often runs out into the frosty air and, naked, rolls in the snow to refresh himself! . . . Catch cold? Oh dear no. He has had too rough a training during the hardships of his childhood. The bania is a distinctly national, indispensable feature. I can imagine a Russian workman blinking in astonishment at the sight of an English bedroom "bath"! . . . If I may be permitted to give away a little secret, even we Russians who have lived in England for many years between ourselves call that bath a "saucer." Of course nearly all our own houses in Russia are provided with bathrooms—unhappily mostly without windows!—which make the bania unnecessary; but in the olden days, when the mysterious Dmitri came from no one knew where and gained the throne, one of the reasons which made the population hate him and kill him was that "he did not go on Saturdays to the bania."

One particular contrast to our ideas of hygiene strikes us here in England. To a Russian mind, the "airing" of anything—a house, a mattress, a garment—can only be done by means of exposure to fresh air and wind and sun; when our things are actually damp, we

certainly utilize heat, but then we call it "drying" accordingly. But more than once I have approached an English cottage, in the hope of getting a room for some friend whom I was unable to accommodate otherwise—usually a Russian, of course, for they never announce their coming, but appear suddenly from nowhere—and have been stopped on the threshold of the apartment by the smallness of the window and the largeness of the bed.

I ask timidly if it is well-aired; and the almost invariable reply is to this effect:

"Oh, I'm sure you'll find it perfectly sweet, ma'am. My husband and me, we've slept in it these six months—and if it wasn't us, it was our own children."

I never dare reveal this to my guests, but I arrange to take them into my own house as soon as possible—even if they have to put up with the Turkish divan in the study!

. . . . .

I would not like my patient reader to run away with the idea that absolutely everything in Russia is as serious as the subjects of this book mainly are. I would like it to be understood that on first visiting Russia the things which most strike the attention are the gaiety, the pleasure-seeking, the *chic* and elegance of smart society, the open-hearted hospitality of everybody, the artistic amusements, the general interest in all forms of education, art, and science, card-playing, flirting, dancing, and talking—talking—talking with *abandon*, about everything, from symbolism and the educational

value of the stage down to the cook's latest disappointment; in short, about everything under the sun—except the weather! The visitor would probably find it very noisy—Russians speak mercilessly loud!—but nothing can be more charming in its naturalness than a night when several friends drop in without an invitation, about ten or eleven, and several hours of fun and wit are wound up with an impromptu supper late after midnight, followed by everybody seeing every one else home.

As to the Russian balls, no stiffness is possible. For one thing, there is no law that makes it necessary to dance out the same dance throughout with the same partner: one often exchanges partners again and again—sometimes from ten to fifteen times—in the course of one dance; on the other hand, one may keep to one partner almost through the whole night without giving rise to matrimonial rumours. Lively little groups form and reform in the course of the ball, and the fun and talk are part of the charms. When discussing this difference in amusements with an English lady, I was asked, "But what do the girls do who are not very interesting? Among all this unorganized dancing they may get no partners at all!" But with us balls are not charitable institutions or matrimonial agencies for uninteresting girls: they are intended for real amusement and love-making.

Imagine a brilliant social dinner or supper given on some interesting occasion (provided the permission had been granted to hold it). After many enthusiastic

speeches and many dozen of champagne come the cognac, mousseux, liqueurs (sometimes—without fear of convention—sherry or beer again) and more champagne. This is the time when "Bruderschaft" is drunk with about half a dozen brand-new acquaintances. Two large, important, grave-looking gentlemen make a humorous picture as they drink to one another in the prescribed German manner, addressing one another as "thou" instead of the old "you," which makes all the difference. It is about this time in the night that the most cherished principles become the subject of animated discussion between the new friends.

I should add perhaps that we women know all about it because the custom of leaving the men at the end of a supper or dinner is unknown in Russia. It would clash with our habitual freedom of intercourse. Whether at a grand party or at a small friendly assembly, we are not bound and not desired to file into the drawing-room and leave our partners at a time when the varied and interesting conversation is at its zenith. No; no one is afraid of getting excited in Russia! It does not give us—indigestion.

I will venture to leave these refined gatherings when all are enjoying their principles and their little dissipations to the full, and give a thought to the real intoxication of a special order which was indulged in in Moscow some ten years ago and is very likely practised still.

In Moscow the "tea" has an additional meaning. As soon as a man of business scents profit in the air he invites the man he wants to meet him at some coffee

house "for two portions of tea"; but it is not considered good form to start the business talk at once. Therefore, after a general chatter over half a dozen large cups, they walk across the street to some little restaurant and order a lunch with *one* bottle of wine; next comes a dinner at the Slavonic Bazaar with many bottles of wine; next—a drive to one or two café-chantants with supper, choruses of Bohemian girls, and champagne, champagne, champagne! . . .

This bacchanalian revel lasts into the next day and another twenty-four hours after that without ever pausing. But the most wonderful part of it is that they manage to arrange serious business at the same time: important questions of trade are being solved, agreements for hundreds of thousands made, and partnerships settled. How they manage to do it no one can tell, not even themselves.

I knew a young journalist who, being in somewhat low water, made up his mind to ask financial aid from a recent acquaintance of his, a rich merchant. He called upon him, explained the reason of his visit, and asked him if he would help him out by the loan of a thousand roubles. Recognition flashed into the good-natured eyes of the merchant; he clasped the young man to his huge breast and immediately took him in his luxurious carriage to a first class restaurant.

They did not return for three days.

When the journalist woke up in the comfortable bedroom of his host on the fourth morning and for the first time was able to dwell on the magnificent reception

he had had, he felt very encouraged and cheerfully renewed his original request.

"My dear fellow," and the merchant spread his arms in perplexity, "with all my heart, had I a rouble left!"

He had not hesitated to expend a couple of thousand roubles to entertain his new literary friend, but he had not given another thought to the cause of his visit.*

Altogether Moscow is the place for curiosities. A short time ago a well-known writer entered a big publishing house. Being very much interested in the authorized publications for the people, he was turning over a pile of cheap little volumes. Great was his surprise, when, under a bright cover with a picture of Puss-in-Boots, he discovered the "Life of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker"! He was puzzled for a moment, then an idea flashed through his mind, and he asked for the "Life of St. Nicholas." His surmise was correct: a gorgeously coloured picture of St. Nicholas served as the cover for "Puss-in-Boots." It appeared that there were some thousands of both editions in stock, but the mistake had entirely escaped the notice of the publishers, until the writer mentioned it.

"Never mind," they answered with a humorous smile, "both editions are selling well."

. . . . . .

* In Russia everything is paid for in cash. When the proprietors and waiters of big restaurants see these bacchanalia, so peculiar to Moscow, going on, they seize their opportunity and make their customers pay in handfuls of gold. The famous "Iar" on the outskirts of Moscow is the scene of most of these wild orgies of the smart and wealthy, though "Samarkand" in Petersburg runs it close.

The national love of singing has been already mentioned several times, but I should like to add two more characteristic incidents.

A young man, with power and strength expressed in every outline of his well-knit figure, is working in his bedroom-laboratory in the small hours of the night. He is making bombs designed to bring retribution to some erring Governor-General or gendarme officer. As one of his comrades ascends the stairs and anxiously approaches his door, he gives a sigh of relief—the young man is singing. For hours his comrade sits on the bed watching the head and shoulders of his friend attentively bent over the minute details of his dangerous work. Before it reaches any Governor-General he may himself be blown to pieces; but simple little tunes, totally unconnected with the surroundings, come gently from his lips. And so the songs and the work go on, right through to the dawn . . . .*

The other incident is told by A. S. Prugavin.

"As I was leaving the buildings of the Solovki to go to the Monastic hostel for the night, a strong sonorous voice unexpectedly broke the gloomy silence of the place. I could not distinguish the words, but the sounds themselves, charged with the sufferings of a lifetime, rang through the frosty air. The next morning I contrived to learn that the voice belonged to a fanatic who had been imprisoned in his turret for twenty years."

For here is the Russian saying, "God himself has

* The photograph of this identical revolutionary student is on p. 284.

commanded man to sing when cats are scratching in his heart."

. . . . . .

England is an excellent school of humour. It is thanks to the green fields and hills of England in December stretching away from my window to the horizon that a very un-Russian little thought arises in my brain and persists in asserting itself . . . . One English writer said that "Woman is interesting just because she keeps you interested: one never knows what she will do next." It is just the case with Russia, you never know what she will do next. But I would gladly dispense with the feminine fascination of my somewhat unaccountable but beloved country, if I could be sure that *next* she will struggle—and struggle cleverly enough—with all her varied forces working harmoniously together—to win what her People deserve.

GLOSSARY OF RUSSIAN WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Archimandrid. Chief of a monastery, a monk of a high rank.

Ataman. Elected chief of the cossacks' ancient headquarters.

Balki. Deep cracks in the soil of the steppes.

Bania. A special building for "bathing," arranged so as to fill it with steam and furnished with an amphitheatre of wooden benches.

Barin. A gentleman, a master.

Baryshnia. A young lady, *Baryshni*—young ladies.

Budushcheie. The future.

Byloie. The past.

Chinovnik. A man of rank in the Government service.

Chrestianin, or *moujik.* A peasant.

Consistoria. Offices under the Holy Synod.

Culturist, or *culturnik.* A new term implying all who work at spreading culture in the land.

Coursistka. A student of "Women's High Courses," a girl-student.

Datcha. A house in the country, for use in the summer only.

Dubinushka. Comes from *dubina* which means a cudgel. The sarcastic diminutive forms the name of a revolutionary national song.

Dvorianka. A lady of the class of nobles.

Dvornik. A watchman of a house. The *dvorniki* are at the same time semi-official helpers of the secret police.

Eparchia. Large administrative district under a bishop.

Gospoda. The gentry; also usually applied in addressing a company.

Gradonatchalnik. The chief of the municipal police.

Gymnasia. The name for the secondary government schools, classical or not, for boys or girls.

Gymnasist. A boy pupil of a gymnasia. *Gymnasistka*—a girl pupil.

Horilka. A name in the little-Russian dialect for the grain-spirit, called *vodka* further north.

Iconostas. The partition dividing the altar from the rest of the church, gilt and covered with large ikons.

Institutka. A pupil of an "Institute for young ladies of gentle birth."

Intelligentzia. Educated society (without class-distinction).

Kantzclaria. Government offices.

Kasha. All sorts of porridge, but chiefly buckwheat.

Katorjane. Those who are sentenced to penal servitude in the mines of Siberia.

Kramola. An ancient expression for revolutionary spirit, now used only in the official language.

Kuren. A hut in the Setch. (Plural, *Kureni.*)

Kazak. A "cossack," really meaning free man, free warrior. (Plural, *Kazaki.*)

Kazatchestvo. An expression implying the whole world of the *Kazaki*, considering them all as one entity.

Ladonka. A small piece of cloth with incense or some "charms" sewn into it.

Moujik. A peasant.

Nagaika. A whip with lead woven into its thongs.

Naloy. A table used in church rites.

Na kazionnyi schot. Expenses paid out of the state exchequer. *Kazionnyi*—everything instituted by the Government.

Na ogoniok. To come "na ogoniok" means to come in without planning the visit, but just being attracted by the light in the window. *Ogon* means fire.

Notchlejka. A night-shelter for the destitute, ½*d.* per night.

"*Novoie Vriemia.*" "New time," the title of the biggest organ of the Press, inspired by the Government.

Obezdolennyie. "Those who have no place in life."

Oboz. A goods caravan.

Okhrana. Ordinarily means the guard. Stands for the name of the special institution of secret police. *Okhranniki*—officials and spies in the service of the *Okhrana.*

Oprokinut. To overturn. The usual slang for "overturning" a glass of vodka.

Podushnaia podat. A tax, so much for each living soul, exacted from the peasantry.

Po etapu. The way of sending those arrested across the country, halting at every prison on the way.

Pop. The common expression for "priest," implying no special respect.

Popadia. The priest's wife.

Popetchitel. Generally speaking, the guardian; specifically, the head of a local education committee.

Prostitie. "Excuse me." Also the old Russian for "good-bye."

Provokatzia. The system of instigating revolt and terrorism.

GLOSSARY

Samovar. The national tea-urn, in which the water is heated by an interior furnace filled with glowing charcoal.

Sarafan. The national girl's dress. *Sarafanchik*—a small sarafan.

Scopom. A very old epithet, applied of old to crowds of people; nowadays used exclusively in the vocabulary of the police.

Shuba. Fur coat.

Shchi. The national soup made of meat, salt cabbage and thick cream.

Setch. The headquarters of the ancient *Kazatchestvo.*

Skit. Headquarters of various religious unions.

Spassibo. "Thank you."

Stanovoy. A country police officer.

Studentchestvo. Expression that stands for the students' world, men and women, taken as a whole.

Tchern. Official slang for common people, literally meaning "black people."

Terem. Attic rooms in which girls and women lived in seclusion in the olden times.

Tiagly chelovieck. An old expression for "taxed man" which really meant "ploughman."

Toujourka. A word coming from the French *toujours,* meaning the everyday double-breasted coat worn by the students, as well as by army and navy officers.

Tulup. A sheep-skin coat, wool inside, not covered with any material at all. *Tulupchik*—a small *tulup.*

Treby. Church rites performed to private orders.

Trepak. A vigorous country dance.

Troika. The national harness, three horses abreast.

Tzynga. An illness prevailing in the prisons and in the periods of famine. It is a gradual decay of all tissues of the body.

Ukaz. An order given out by the Tsar.

Vetche. A national form of self-government in ancient Russia: an assembly of rich and poor, old and young, man and woman.

Zaporojskoe Kazatchestvo. The nucleus of the Kazatchestvo that dwelt "beyond the rapids"—*za porogami*—of the river Dnieper.

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